Understanding Collaborative Management in Higher Education, the Possibilities and Parameters of Partnership: a Case Study of CADISE

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the emergent area of collaborative management practised in the higher education context by reflecting on a three year case study of seven specialist performing and creative arts higher education institutions at the start of the twenty first century. The members were part of a formal consortium (CADISE) engaged in a HEFCE funded project on 'Developing Collaborative Management Skills for Senior Executives'. The principal research question of 'how do we understand collaborative management?' is supported by three subsidiary research questions exploring the external factors that have influenced the growth of academic consortia in higher education; the factors that influenced the development of CADISE and attracted its Principals and Chief Executive Officers to it in the first place; and the practices and skills that have emerged to support collaborative management.

The argument in this thesis is that collaborative management is new, different and complex, calls for different approaches and ways of managing alliances to accommodate the uncertainty and ambiguity that the changing world of higher education faces. The thesis is underpinned by two theoretical constructs: 'strategic intent' (Hamel and Prahalad, 1989) and its place in 'animating the dream' of the CADISE Policy Group both as a collective and through their individual imaginations of what the alliance could do for them; and the 'legitimacy of messiness', a theoretical framework for thinking both about the performance of process and the process of performance (de Rond) and developed in the pharmaceutical and bio-technology sphere of strategic alliances.

The locus of the research is the case study on the seven Chief Executive Officers of CADISE who through the funded project were both learning about the shift from autonomously managing their own institutions to collaborative management in a consortium setting at the same time as managing, embedding and sustaining the CADISE through its first three years. This called for working at a number of levels simultaneously in developing both strategy and an operational infrastructure, building vision, managing change in a complex and turbulent environment, defending and preserving their institutions, positioning the consortium and working together to meld their strategic intents at the same time as experientially learning about collaborative management through an externally funded project.

The thesis is constructed according to three parallel dimensions of the 'policy context' for higher education, the 'people' (as collaborative leaders) and 'process, that both underpin and intersect throughout the study. From the findings in the case study this three 'P' model is built upon to suggest a 'P' model of understanding and handling collaborative employing the different skills, new ways of thinking and interacting that are required in collaborative working. Its contribution to new knowledge is through the 'up-close and personal' three year observation of the emergent process from the perspective of a reflective practitioner engaged in collaborative management, against an uncertain backdrop, together with an analysis of the personal constructs of the leaders of an innovative and pioneering model of collaboration from an empirical researcher point of view.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have waited for this moment and will not fall short in my thanks and dedication of this thesis to so many people. First and foremost my thanks go to my four sons, Jacob, Joel, Owen and Lewis who have grown up alongside this research, and for whom the benchmark of homelife and maternal domesticity has often plummeted when pitched against the requirements of part-time doctoral study and full-time employment. I forget the number of open-ended discussions on the value of a PhD versus untidiness (mine, not theirs) and the absence of sock-sorting. My apologies to Lewis also, who endured the ultimate embarrassment of his mother when holidaying in Crete, floating on a lilo, openly reading a book on Qualitative Researching when all the other Mums were at the pool reading holiday novels. Forgive me, things will change. I also express thanks to the person who introduced me to Hamel and Prahalad’s concept of ‘strategic intent’ in the first place, for stimulating conversations that I sometimes miss and for a demonstration that there are unintended consequences of strategic intent that take you in a different direction. That’s life!

I am also indebted to many friends and wider family who have helped see me through this long journey - and to my mother who died in 1999 a date she and I joked about me getting a doctorate, some fifty years after she got hers. In particular, my thanks go to my friend Jo Moran-Ellis and her kitchen, for her unstinting generosity in pointing me in the right direction when my confidence faltered, and for those times hi-jacked by me when we should have been having another drink, or still socialising – a heady concoction of her academic input and really good food! My (not only) Saturday morning friends, Cathie, Val, Ann and Tunsgate Square, Guildford, have been a constant throughout, as have many work colleagues both in Croydon and in CADISE and in the last twelve months at Greenwich. To Mike and Val, with whom I have climbed (walked) so many mountains, and declined the trip to the Himalayas in favour of this, my personal mountain, the postcard from Annapurna suffices for now.

I must thank my supervisor Professor Robin Middlehurst with whom I have had many animated discussions, who meticulously read and offered advice right up to the end and who always seemed to know what I was trying to say as well as my co-supervisor, Professor John Holford and to Professor Gareth Parry who was such a help in the early days.

Finally, my greatest thanks is reserved for the Policy Group who provided such a pioneering, rich and fertile territory on which to be able to research and with whom I have had so many formal and informal conversations. I recognise the uniqueness and privilege of such an opportunity and hope that in my own small way I have ‘painted a picture’ of the journey in which each was a participant. Particular thanks to Professor Gary Crossley and Professor Stuart Bartholomew, my two successive line managers as Chairs of CADISE, and who fought my patch and helped find me time for this study, as well as to Professor Robin Baker who led the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project.

I come out of this PhD study, a completely different person from the one that started it – so many parallel journeys - and to all my friends and colleagues and people I’ve met along the way, "yes I did submit it in the end – read on!"
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CHAPTER 1 - UNDERSTANDING COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT, CONTEXT AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this new world of networks, coalitions, and alliances, strategic partnerships are not an option but a necessity.... if the "capacity to collaborate" is not already in your organisation, you had better get busy making it so.

(Doz and Hamel, 1998 p.ix)

This research explores the question of how we understand collaborative management of strategic partnerships in higher education and more pertinently why we need to understand its constituent components. My proposition is that inter-organisational collaborative management is different and more complex than single institutional management and that therefore different skills are needed, complete with new ways of thinking and interacting if such partnerships are to be sustained. To test this proposition my research focuses on a specific case of a partnership of specialist creative and performing arts higher education institutions that embarked in 1999 on a formal consortium called CADISE. For the Chief Executives (CEOs) involved, the key driver to form and manage such a collaborative venture, related to a potentially hostile environment where financial stringencies in resourcing higher education, the predatory nature of large institutions and increasingly competitive 'market forces', could potentially combine to threaten the existence of the 'specialist' institution.

It has been suggested that in order to survive and flourish in the twenty first century, higher education institutions need to recognise mutual inter-dependence and engage in partnerships, rather than compete unnecessarily and inefficiently. If this is so, then the seven small specialist institutions that comprise CADISE had a corresponding requirement to understand how as an interorganisational collaboration, and more specifically, as a collective leadership group they should 'manage' the collaboration and steer its strategy. New forms of strategic collaborations, partnerships and alliances are emerging in different guises in the higher education sector across international boundaries (e.g. Worldwide Universities Network, Universitas 21) in regional contexts (e.g.Unis4NE, Yorkshire & Humberside Universities Association) and for specific purposes such as in Foundation Degrees Consortia and Lifelong Learning Networks that traverse the further and higher education sectors in England. The emerging regional models of Unis4NE, and Yorkshire & Humberside Universities Association were seen as possible models for CADISE as they were similar in their aspirations of leveraging resources and adding value through pursuing collaborative activity across a whole range of activities.
The wider literature on strategic alliances suggests that successful collaborative management is built on the evolution of a shared strategic intent, a vision or mission for the alliance’s existence and a need to understand about and constantly revisit the evolving practice of collaborative management. However, this does not always appear to be a straightforward process since there is a persistently high failure rate for collaborative activity; it is estimated to average at least 50%, with consortia likely to disappoint in 90% of cases.\(^1\) Whilst this data may be problematic because performance literature lacks a precise and consistent definition of success and failure, it suggests that there is a need to understand the paradox explored by de Rond (2003:2) of why there is a proliferation of and increasing recourse to collaborative activity in the face of such apparent high failure rates. A second paradox identified by de Rond is more important for this research namely, that there is an assumption of rational corporate strategic management in the approach to understanding alliances, based on an expectation of homogeneity, despite the real complexity of organisational life. This literature, these findings and the paradoxes described offer important pointers to the issues that need to be investigated in relation to collaborative management of academic consortia.

From a wider search of the literature two particular theoretical constructs proved useful for the research design, forming parallel tracks to underpin an exploration of the process and practice of collaborative management. They are both considered and developed in more detail in the subsequent literature chapters, but are introduced here as:

1) **Strategic Intent.** The work of Hamel and Prahalad (1989) focuses on the concept of strategic intent and suggests how in harnessing the intentions and aspirations of an organisation, strategic intent is ‘animating a dream’ and encapsulating a desired future state or aspiration. For Hamel and Prahalad, strategic intent conceptualises how to compete successfully in a hostile environment with limited resources, crafting a multi-faceted, emotional and analytical dynamic that is concerned with meaning, purpose and passion. Within the research, this serves as a mechanism for looking at some of the purposes behind collaborative management grounded in the case study and

\(^1\)For example McKinsey Bleeks and Ernst (1991) estimate alliance failure at 33% to 50 % whereas Accenture (1999) suggest 61% and PricewaterhouseCoopers (2000) suggest 59%.
helps chart the deliberations that took place to find a strategic intent for CADISE and to translate this into practice.

2) The Legitimacy of Messiness. de Rond (2002, 2003) offers a theoretical framework for thinking both about the performance of process and the process of performance in collaborative management. Through what is termed the 'legitimacy of messiness' he suggests that by adopting a pluralistic approach and accepting heterogeneity as a starting point in drawing observations from the empirical world of organisations, both the relative messiness that exists in alliance relationships can be legitimated and a degree of social order discerned.

2.0 SETTING THE CONTEXT AND IDENTIFYING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The empirical focus of this research is on the case of CADISE as a formal strategic partnership, designated as a consortium and on the level of the Chief Executives as architects of CADISE, who collaboratively managed and steered it collectively as the Policy Group. It charts their:

- Exploration of collaborative management through a formal project ‘Developing Collaborative Management Skills for CADISE Senior Executives’ over a finite period (from now on referred to as the ‘Developing Collaborative Management Skills’ project) supported by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).
- Concurrent strategy formation and practice of collaborative management through the business of CADISE.

The research examines what the strategic intent, vision or mission for CADISE was, explores the difficulties of establishing shared intent and follows the evolving practices of ‘collaborative management’ (a term the Policy Group explicitly chose to express the platform for their collaborative learning when running the Consortium) in a changing higher education dynamic. The question arises whether the individual ‘strategic intents’ of each Chief Executive get subsumed within the collaboration or emerge as a separate dominant force and additionally, whether collaborative practices best suit a complex, shifting and unstable policy backdrop. The research also looks at what actually happens when both formal and informal intents surface and end up existing within an external policy dynamic that has the potential to be constantly dashed by a fast moving environment.
In one sense the success or otherwise of the venture revolves around the issue of whether if the ‘sum of the parts’ are to be greater than the whole, Chief Executives of individual institutions are prepared to give up something to gain something more. Small specialist institutions in the UK are characterised by personal leadership exercised through autonomous Chief Executive Officers. For consortia and alliances to be formed and perform well, the Policy Group identified a need for a shift in thinking on their behalf from managing ‘autonomously’ to managing ‘collaboratively’. The formal espoused and public intents of the consortium, such as critical mass, collaborating to compete, shared leadership, direction and goals - in order both to lever resources and gain efficiencies - also have to be seen in the context of actual informal intents that are played out. These include the individual mental maps of institutional leaders, experiential learning and managing a range of experiences and relationships (Bensimon, Birnbaum and Neumann: 1989; Eddy; 2005).

Partnerships and alliances have been easy for higher education policymakers to talk about as ‘value for money’ solutions to accommodate a diminishing resource, but it will be argued that they are deceivingly difficult to implement and manage for whatever reason they are implemented. Historically, the culture and traditions of higher education have emphasised strict institutional autonomy, with institutional rewards focused on independent effort. This approach has resulted in colleges focusing on their distinguishing factors rather than on shared characteristics. This has produced a competitive rather than collaborative environment. Some would argue that the way forward is to translate the ‘zero sum game’ in such circumstances of someone ‘winning’ and someone ‘losing’ into a ‘collaborating to compete’ environment of the ‘win-win’ for all within a partnership. The desirable paradigm for organisational behaviour in the 1990s in the UK has been characterised in terms of cooperation, collaboration and teamwork. We can therefore ask the question about how such relationships are collaboratively managed within academic consortia?

It will be argued that the shift for small specialist institutions from managing autonomously to managing collaboratively is a new phenomenon and response to the global contextual factors in which UK higher education operates. This research seeks to create new knowledge about how collaborative management is implemented in practice on the basis that managing collaboratively is different from managing autonomously. It requires a process oriented approach that does not accord well with the monist, rational and managerial orientation of much of the extant literature on managing partnerships and strategic alliances. The scarcity of a focused
literature and research base for higher education leaders who engage in managing collaborations suggests that the skills and competencies remain largely in the domain of tacit and emerging knowledge. This is despite the growth in number and intensity of collaborative relationships ranging from simple co-operative agreements, to partnerships, strategic alliances, confederal solutions and mergers.

Specifically, this research aims to make a contribution to new knowledge by:

i) setting the management of strategic partnerships, and academic consortia in a clearly defined context; and

ii) aiding understanding of the underlying dynamics that underpin the management of consortia and impact on partnership performance.

Through the medium of a case study, the research offers an in-depth evaluation and practical model that supports findings emanating from the US context. In the US where many academic consortia have been formally in existence for thirty years, a key finding is that:

whilst starting a consortium is a relatively straightforward process, ensuring its survival and effectiveness is a much more complex endeavour.

(Baus and Ramsbottom, 1999:3)

It is important to emphasise this research is on collaborative management of a consortium tackling collaboration in a higher education context. Attempting to avoid the 'blurring' between collaborative management and collaboration has been a challenge throughout this research. This is especially so as there is an embryonic literature emerging on 'collaboration' (although still relatively scant) whereas its management has yet, except on the rarest of occasions, to be mentioned or recognised as a concept, practice or skill in the higher education context. Exceptions do exist: for example, Scott (2005) reflecting on mass higher education, ten years on calls for more models of collaboration, recognising that one of the key challenges is how to manage and govern institutions within open environments. He went so far as to suggest that there may be a need to disinvest in institutions as territorial blocs and to invest more in partnerships, relationships and networks.

The distinction I make between 'collaborative management' and 'collaboration' is that collaborative management is the focused activity of 'how to do' collaborative relations and agendas, rather than engagement or participation in collaboration (a broader and
looser term). It presents management as a process shared by all the members of a group.

To ground the research focus of understanding 'collaborative management' through the practical experience of the specialist higher education institutions within CADISE, three distinct but overlapping strands have been tackled:

- A temporal strand: developing a chronology about the emergence and growth of CADISE, a consortium of (then) seven specialist creative and performing arts institutions.
- A relational strand: providing a snapshot in time of two sets of dynamic relationships: first, the relational policy context for small specialist institutions with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) as key stakeholder; second the interpersonal relationships between the seven CEOs.
- A practice strand: learning about the concept, skills and practice of collaborative management through the experience of the seven Chief Executive Officers, who collectively with the CADISE Co-ordinator, formed the CADISE Policy Group during the period of this research.

Using CADISE as a case-study in which to explore the principal question of how we understand collaborative management, the strands above seek to provide answers to three subsidiary research questions in the study: first, what are the external factors that have influenced the growth of academic consortia and of CADISE in particular?; second, how or why did CADISE and the concept of collaborative management develop; and third how do the skills, practice and concept of collaborative management work in the CADISE context and what lessons can be learnt from the experience?

3.0 INTRODUCING THE RESEARCHER

My full-time work is in collaborative management, although until the particular project that forms the focus of this research was half way through, I could not in a single strap-line describe what my job or work role was. I am also a practitioner researcher, a role undertaken and described by Robson in his book 'Real World Research', as:

\[\text{someone who holds down a job in some particular area and is at the same time, involved in carrying out systematic enquiry which is of relevance to the job} \]

(Robson, 2002: 534)

As the focus of this research revolves around the notion of collaborative management, it is important to articulate a working definition of what is understood by
it, although the distinction between it and other forms of partnership will be explored in more detail later in the thesis. I define collaborative management as:

the process where two or more organisations or individuals within their own autonomous capacity manage a relationship in which they have made a commitment to work together to build on commonality and complementarity within a recognised collaborative framework.

This contrasts with the definition offered in the context of innovative organisational collaborations, networks and alliances by Barbara Gray who suggests:

interorganisational collaboration [may be defined as a] process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible.

(Gray, 1989:5)

Huxham’s definition (1996), has a different emphasis with a focus that concentrates on communications, exchange and risk-sharing. Whilst both of these definitions are useful, they are problematic in that the processes involved are likely to change as the symbolic meaning of the collaboration changes. Through my research on collaborative management in the context of CADISE, my aspiration is to identify collaborative management practices that can be applicable and exportable to a range of relational forms.

I was appointed in 1999 as the first Co-ordinator for an initiative sponsored by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The HEFCE supplied pump-priming funds under its Restructuring and Collaboration Fund for four art, design and communication colleges to formalise their joint shape as a recognised consortium to be known as CADISE, the Consortium of Arts & Design Institutions in Southern England. The subject and the experiential learning that took place became so fascinating to me that I wished to explore and understand fully from an intellectual, practitioner and policy perspective exactly ‘what was going on here, apart from the obvious?’ (Alvesson: 1993)

The four CEOs that initially formed CADISE, believed absolutely in the value of, and the need to maintain diverse provision in the changing territories of the higher education sector in England that were gaining pace following the publication of the

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2 The original four institutions: The Arts Institute at Bournemouth, Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication, Surrey Institute of Art & Design, University College, Wimbledon School of Art, were to be joined by a further three specialist higher education institutions by the time of the subject of this research. The additional three were Central School of Speech and Drama, Trinity College of Music and Kent Institute of Art & Design.
Dearing Report in 1997. They also recognised a need to collaborate in a manner that ensured not only the security of their individual institution’s integrity, but also a proper appreciation of the emerging Regional Development Agencies and their agendas. This included the special and particular role that these four (and later seven) specialist higher education institutions could play in traditional mode education, continuing education, widening participation, economic regeneration and research.

My appointment as Co-ordinator was described as ‘crucial’ to achieving the consortium’s aims in the original proposal to HEFCE for funding and I was to work to each Chief Executive of the partnership, but principally through the confirmed, Chair of the CADISE Policy Group. During the first year, the Co-ordinator was to map the areas suitable for further collaboration between the members and to look at models for collaboration suitable to such a grouping that could be promulgated more widely throughout the higher and further education sectors. It had additionally been recognised that as small institutions it was difficult to ‘lend’ sufficient time of a member, or members of staff or to grow expertise quickly enough to bring forward, maintain and manage collaborative projects. It was anticipated that my role whilst initially funded through HEFCE, should ultimately become self-sustaining through Consortium member subscriptions and through top-slicing a small percentage of funding won through bidding initiatives.

This research is not however, about me and my role, although as the section below sets out explicitly, the context of the Practitioner-Researcher and my part in the unfolding work of CADISE and its relevance to this research, needs to be understood and explored in order to support the efficacy of the research design and the methodologies employed. Rather, the subject is about how to understand the concept of and emerging practice of collaborative management in the higher education context. The focus is thus on the practice of and experiential learning about collaborative management, researched through CADISE in its first three years of operation and through its seminal HEFCE funded project for the seven Chief Executives on ‘Developing Collaborative Management Skills for CADISE Senior Executives’. The significance of this project was that it encompassed not just the ‘why’ but the ‘how’ and – even a step further - the ‘how to’ do collaborative management.

It is also important to note that my research study took place against the backdrop of a shifting higher education dynamic and between two significant landmark statements on higher education at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries: the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, the Dearing Report (1997) and the government White Paper, 'the Future of Higher Education' (2003). Indeed, the recommendations of Lord Dearing in relation to working collaboratively were a catalyst for the formation of CADISE. It was noted by the inaugural Chair of the CADISE Policy Group, that it was one of the jobs of CADISE to 'stargaze and anticipate the future'.

3.1 THE PRACTITIONER-RESEARCHER ROLE IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS RESEARCH

I would argue that the gathering momentum of global and technological change, results in a need for continuous learning that is fundamental to professional life. In response, 'real world' research grounded in work based learning has assumed its place in the higher education environment as well as in other practitioner disciplines such as nursing, social work and other sectors of education. As such, practitioner-researchers are a "new breed of practitioner performing a dual role as both practitioners and researchers" (Jarvis, 1999: xi). Jarvis also asserts that as society becomes more reflexive, practitioners have become reflective, reacting to the consequences of previous events. If, as Giddens argues, reflexive society is a social consequence of modernity (Giddens;1990) then reflective learning, it is suggested, is the inevitable outcome for the individual.

Reflexivity recognises that researchers are inescapably part of the social world that they are researching, and that this social world is an already interpreted world by the actors, undermining the notion of objective reality. In my case I would be bringing my own biography to the research situation, and although I would know the principal participants well in this context, they would still behave in a particular way in my presence. Reflexivity suggests that as a practitioner-researcher I should acknowledge and disclose myself in research 'holding myself up to the light' and echoing Cooley's (1902) notion of the 'looking glass self'. I would therefore remain as a reflexive researcher, acutely aware of the ways in which my selectivity,

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perception, background and inductive processes and paradigms shape the research. I am a research instrument, and as McCormick and James (1988:191) have noted, combating reactivity through reflexivity requires such researchers to monitor closely and continually evaluate their own interactions with participants, their own reaction, roles, biases, and any other matters that might contaminate the research.

My role as researcher and author of this thesis must therefore be understood in that context of practitioner-research because a significant amount of the data to support the research has been generated within this paradigm and with the advantages that are part of being a practitioner-researcher. These have been set out in some detail as a comparator to 'outside' researchers, (Robson, 2002:535) and include the advantages of 'insider' opportunities, 'practitioner–researcher' synergy and 'practitioner' opportunities to influence and reduce implementation problems. It must be remembered that the corresponding disadvantages of the role include time constraints in trying to do a systematic enquiry on top of normal commitments, 'insider' problems relating to preconceptions about issues and/or solutions and particularly in my case, in relation to differences (and associated difficulties) of hierarchy and perspective.

Whilst I was part of the Policy Group comprising the (then) seven Chief Executive Officers who collectively, as the drivers of CADISE are a focus of my research, my role, capacity and responsibilities distinguished me from them. They were the leaders, who on behalf of their institutions were making the personal commitment to participate in collaborative management as defined at the beginning of this chapter.

As an integral part of the Policy Group, and additionally, with the role of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project co-ordinator, I have worn at least two hats since the inception of the project: as practitioner in my paid employment (both as CADISE Co-ordinator and project co-ordinator and chief interlocutor for the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project) and as researcher, in my personal research towards a doctoral qualification. The two have intersected more than might have been envisaged, through the following roles and will be acknowledged and discussed more fully in Chapter 2 on Research Design and Methodology:-

• Acting as project Co-ordinator for 'The Developing Collaborative Management Skills' project.
• Researching models of collaboration, and as part of CADISE delegations visiting US and European models of collaboration.

• Involvement as part of the CEO series of workshops working toward defining a collaborative culture, facilitated by the Judge Institute of Management Studies, Cambridge.

• Commissioning (with the Chief Executive of the lead institution for the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project), Brighton University to carry out the study on the impact of technology on collaborative management.

• Assuming editorial responsibility for writing up the above project and publishing it as lessons learnt in CADISE collaborative management.

• Managing the national dissemination conference event at the Royal Geographical Society, London.

I have thus fronted the public face of this project, acting as a conduit for information and chief interlocutor as one of many tasks in my full-time capacity. I have also, as is characteristic of many practitioner-researchers, undertaken doctoral research as a part-time student.

It has been argued in the case of social work (Allen, Meares and Lane:1990) that the 'practitioner-researcher' synergy referred to earlier, can be integrated and is of benefit to both practice and research. In the context of higher education, straddling these two roles, although not uncommon in practice, is increasingly recognised as a feature of practitioner research and acknowledged as such (Jarvis, 1999:8).

A paramount aim for me has been to research the concept of, practices and processes that support collaborative management with a view to developing theory from my practice and making some tentative suggestions for others contemplating the management of collaborative relationships to follow. In doing this I have moved across a continuum from close up – the proximity as part of reflective practice and participant observation - through to researching at a distance and from 'afar' through fieldwork.

Charles Handy, writing a new introduction to the fourth edition of Understanding Organisations (1999) commented that his drivers for writing that book in the first place were that:

...common sense and intuitive leadership needed to be backed up by a better understanding of how human communities worked.
and later on in the introduction another factor chimed with the nature of collaborative management research within the CADISE context, when Handy noted that he was pleased to see that the language of:

*constructing, commanding and controlling is giving way to a more political language of leading, co-ordinating and persuading.*

(Handy, 1999: 10).

### 3.2 CASE STUDIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PRACTITIONER RESEARCHER

Because of the transitory nature of practice and the need to research ephemeral events, the qualitative case study has been the main method employed. However, the caveats suggested by Stake (1994), that customarily people are cases and that situations can be cases, but processes are not because the actual process of practicing lacks the 'boundedness' to be considered a case, is an important consideration. Stake provides a definition of a case study as *'the process of learning about the case and the product of our learning'* (1994: 236-237); and Jarvis (1999:85) has further contended that the practitioner-researcher's research situation *'is always a particular situation, and for this reason it can be researched only as a case study'*.

Stake (1994: 238) has suggested that there are six aspects of uniqueness of a case study:

- The nature of the case.
- Its historical background.
- The physical setting.
- Other contexts, including economic, political, legal and aesthetic.
- Other cases through which this case is recognised.
- Informants through whom the case can be known.

At the outset of this study on collaborative management within CADISE, it would appear that most of these aspects are applicable to understanding the practice of collaborative management. However, the uniqueness of the study has necessarily to raise questions about the usefulness of it in the wider context. Whilst Stake has noted that *"uniqueness... is not universally loved"* by researchers (1994: 238) in the case of practitioner-researchers it has been argued (Nadler and Hibino, 1994; Jarvis, 1999) that the case study must be the main means that practitioner-researchers employ in seeking to contextualise and research ephemeral events. One of the aims of this research is that it will be possible to determine an emergent pattern of practice, that while unique may form a model for others to learn from and follow. The
research seeks to provide rich data both from the records and observations relating to the strategic decisions and operational management of CADISE and the reflections on the practice and learning from its project on Developing Collaborative Management Skills.

Aspirations at the outset of this research to be an expert practitioner, to satisfy my own intellectual curiosity and to underpin this new and emergent branch of management with a robust academic rationale have to be considered against an audit of my own expertise in designing, carrying out and analysing the study as well as experience and confidence in working within my organisation. My biography includes some twenty five years as an academic and a manager in further and higher education, with a disciplinary background in law (undergraduate level), law and sociology (masters level) and day-to-day educational management expertise. However, with CADISE much of my daily work in the collaborative context, felt as if it was in the realms of intuition and 'learning by doing', with no set text or precedent from which to learn. In models of new knowledge creation much of this has been termed as working in the realm of 'tacit knowledge'.

It seems that the nature of my practice would call for a combination of theoretical knowledge (grounded in my professional experience as both an academic lecturer/manager in Further and Higher Education) and my pragmatic knowledge – a very practical form of knowledge which was not grounded in a generalisable truth or possessing an empirical reality underlying it. I had an explicit aim to generate a theoretical framework for the practice of collaborative management, not least because the Consortium had no single body of literature to consult or one particular model to follow. Such literature or models that were available seemed to require a synthesis of many interdisciplinary themes and subject areas.

I have been known to describe my initial feelings and approach toward CADISE, as being handed an empty book with only a very clearly articulated 'Forward' on the opening page set out by the four founding institutional Chief Executives. The mission had been researched and negotiated amongst the original four Chief Executives and laid out in the Heads of Agreement. My initial role was then to work with them and others at different organisational levels to be able to write the unfolding story on the following blank pages.
Whilst many practitioners who become practitioner researchers do not always identify themselves as such, only aware that they are practitioners, but entirely overlooking the research aspects of their activities, the context of my moving to this particular job whilst already registered for a PhD study ensured that I was not in this category. I was already conscious of the duality of roles. I was able to be both part of, explore and examine the changing world of strategic directions for Chief Executives guiding their institutions, the concept of collaborative management and the workplace learning that it encompassed. The research was also a vehicle for me to examine the relationship between my practice, practical knowledge and theoretical perspectives drawing on a wide range of literatures ranging across policy studies, management science, transformation and change, organisational behaviour, team work and emotional intelligence.

As will be seen later in the research the disparate nature of these literatures has been considered under three parallel trajectories of policy, people and process to try and achieve a sense of clarity. The discussions of the literature are prefaced by a consideration of definitions and differences in the language of collaborative management. These form the research framework within which to manage the complexity of and multi-dimensional aspects of the literatures and the multi-facets of practice. Indeed, it is interesting that in order to capture, make sense of and understand the essence of much that I have participated in over the last six years, it has been necessary to delve into so many inter-related disciplines that traverse business, management, sociology, psychology, policy perspectives and higher education literatures. Pursuing doctoral study in relation to each of these disciplines would have been a mammoth task. Therefore, a practical stance of grounding the research within the management context has allowed the locus to remain in this area; in addition, research across the management field itself draws on many disciplinary and inter-disciplinary branches.

With regard to practitioners engaged in the duality of roles described above, Jarvis noted (1999:8) that there may be problems for practitioner-researchers who perform two roles simultaneously and especially when they see themselves strictly as practitioners. This is because practitioner-researchers may have gained their sense of self-identity through their practice and the addition of the research role might affect the way they perceive and perform their practice role. I was fortunate in that I was developing contemporaneously both my practice and my research role. To draw a different analogy from that which I earlier described as a 'Forward' at the start of an
empty book, it could be that I had been parachuted into territory with a clear but crudely hand drawn map, and my job was both to find the way to the stated objective, and to chart the journey so as to be able to produce a detailed 'Pathfinder Ordnance Survey map' complete with contours. This would be necessary, both as a strategic objective of my practice role, in modelling an alternative model of collaborative management for small specialist institutions, and for the role of reflective practitioner and researcher.

3.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

From the outset I was aware of the potential ethical issues that I would encounter in dealing with seven Chief Executives who were my colleagues and my 'bosses' and who would also be 'significant players' in this research. Whilst I had reassurance from the early days of my employment, that the CADISE Policy Group would support my research through the sponsorship of my PhD, I still had concerns about where the 'permissions' to observe and write about both personally and professionally would reach their boundaries.

I was principal interlocutor and co-ordinator of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project that is the focus for the research. This required me to speak on public platforms, reflect on and write in depth about collaborative management and encompassed not only disseminating the project via presentations, but also, for example co-editing and publishing the book, CADISE Collaborative Management: Lessons Learnt (Goodwin & O'Neil: 2002). However, there were many interactions and observations that I recorded for the purposes of my research that I reserved for academic pondering and analysis in a much more intimate and less self-conscious way than I might have done in my more public reflection on professional practice. It is for this reason that agreement was secured in 2002 that whilst the case study could be acknowledged and recognisable as that of CADISE, anonymity in terms of the written account for both institutions and CEOs would be a key priority.

Contrasting the example of an ethical dilemma, cited by Jarvis (1999: 8) "of an international health consultant researching her own practice" with my own perspective, one can see a marked difference. Jarvis tells of the practitioner meeting with senior government officials (colleagues and clients) in a country where she was working and of whom she wanted to ask research-related questions, rather than those her work required. She suspended doing this at the actual point of practice
and returned to them later when they no longer occurred naturally. She was aware that 'she had lost the moment' whereas the proximity of my research and professional practice in relation to both CADISE and the particular Developing Collaborative Management Skills project allowed me to take a more pragmatic approach, to record or to feel free to ask (conduct my research, generate my data) at the point of practice.

Jarvis has further commented that for the international health consultant to pursue her research at an inappropriate time in her practice would not have been moral. For me knowing that I was working within the broad parameters of informed consent of seven intelligent, politically aware and astute Chief Executives Officers, allowed me to proceed with an awareness of moral and ethical issues, but not to preclude me from contemporaneously engaging in my work and research.

The design and methodology of my research will be explored in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3 together with the ethical challenges and the sheer impracticability of always stating and clarifying to the Policy Group in which capacity I was working: i.e. whether I was thinking in a research or professional practice context. This does, however, need to be squared with what Strike (1990) in his paper on the ethics of educational evaluation has termed the principle of 'benefit maximisation', where he advocates that best decision is the one that results in the greatest benefit for most people; the principle of 'equal respect' (respect for the equal worth of all people); treatment as an end rather than means (free and rational regard) and an acceptance of individuals' entitlements to the same basic rights as others.

Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) have expressed this in another way, as researchers striking a balance between demands placed on them as professional scientists in pursuit of the truth, and their subjects' rights and values that are potentially threatened by the research — a concept known as the 'costs/benefits ratio'.

4.0 INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH

This research seeks to explore a fundamental question: how do we understand collaborative management in the higher education context of strategic partnerships?
To start to answer this it is important to examine the contextual drivers for engaging in this kind of association and work through the policy context layers of “collaborating to compete” in global higher education, in UK higher education at the beginning of the 21st century, and in the small specialist institutional context, where it can perhaps be argued that the impact of ‘winds of change’ are felt first and most acutely. The research seeks to position the growth of academic consortia and the collaborative management of them against the political, economic, sociological and technological backdrop and the increasing inter-dependency of higher education institutions in the 21st century. At the same time, recognising that this territory itself is vast, the policy context overview is limited to how it can inform and illuminate the process and people dynamics of collaborative management. For the purposes of this research, therefore, it focuses on the Policy Group as strategic leaders and managers. In this study there are three related research questions:

- What are the external factors that have influenced the growth of academic consortia in the higher education sector and CADISE in particular?
- How or why did CADISE and the collaborative management concept develop? – that is, what were the factors that attracted the Principals and CEOs to the concept of CADISE?
- What are the practices and skills that have emerged to support collaborative management from the collective learning by the Policy Group in the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project and the experience of implementing collaborative management in a formal consortium context?

The research is contextualised within three circles (represented in Figure 1, below) of scoping a strategic intent for CADISE, that is what might be crudely called at this point as the vision, mission and values of CADISE; a second circle, embracing the environmental context within the higher education dynamic and at the intersection of these two circles is the dynamic of people and process focusing on organisational strategy formation and behaviour and the group processes, inter-personal skills and emotional contexts of collaborative management.
This, it is argued forms the crux of how we understand collaborative management. The research is based on an in-depth case study of the seven Chief Executives and their endeavours to position CADISE within the UK higher education market, to articulate a form of management that seeks to preserve the strategic merit of specialism and specialist institutions and yet offer an alternative model for others to follow.

An account of the three years in which learning via the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project took place, the contemporaneous practice of collaborative management within CADISE, the stories of the CEOs as members of the CADISE Policy Group themselves told through semi structured interviews and the research of 'others' into CADISE will all combine to contribute to the answer of how we understand collaborative management in strategic partnerships. The journey by the CEOs of confronting difficult questions of collective strategic intent, mission and vision is explored both within the consortium itself and the project context, as well as the challenges to their autonomous institutional interests that potentially result in barriers to successful collaborative management.

5.0 INTRODUCING CADISE, THE INSTITUTIONS AND THE CADISE 'DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT SKILLS' PROJECT

5.1 INTRODUCING CADISE

CADISE stands for the Consortium of Arts & Design Institutions in Southern England. During the period of this research CADISE comprised seven specialist arts, design and communication higher education institutions geographically distributed in London and the south east. It was formed in 1999 as a dedicated consortium in order to:

• Give a representative voice in the arts, design and communication sector.
• Capture the benefits of collaboration through an enhanced critical mass (collectively some 10,600 students and 500 staff full time equivalent).
• Meet the unfolding regional agenda.
• Build a collaborative agenda based on the grounds of ‘commonality’ and ‘complementarity’.
• Develop an alternative exportable model of collaborative management for the HE sector.

Its membership was: The Arts Institute at Bournemouth, Central School of Speech and Drama, Kent Institute of Art & Design, Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication, The Surrey Institute of Art & Design, University College, Trinity College of Music and Wimbledon School of Art. (Further details about the Colleges, their CEOs and ‘How CADISE operates’ can be seen at the back of the ‘CADISE Championing Specialism Brochure’, Appendix 1).

The formal agreement that bounds the collaborative relationship, the Heads of Agreement (Appendix 2), was signed by each Chief Executive Officer on behalf of their institution as they joined and articulates the mission, aims, structure and operation of CADISE, together with a statement about HEFCE’s support and recognition for the collaborative venture. It is clear that, both from experience and researching best practice in collaboration, the grounding of any relationship in a brief formal memorandum of understanding, signed on behalf of each partner institution by its Chief Executive to signify commitment at the highest level, is essential. It serves as both a reminder of that commitment and the aspirations of the collaborative venture and remains a useful point of referral when the rocky terrain of collaborative relationships may need to be negotiated.

6.2 CADISE INSTITUTIONS

The Institutions of CADISE each have their own individual histories and many are the products of past mergers themselves between smaller institutions. In the relatively recent past some have also been subject to more or less forceful attempts at merger with other institutions. Individual descriptors of the partner institutions, formulated for various CADISE publications are included on the back of the CADISE brochure in Appendix 1, and various similarities can be pointed to, e.g. each CEO shared a conviction and was passionate about the perceived educational benefits that could be gained from specialist subject provision which merger with a generalist institution
would threaten. Although all the partner institutions have grown considerably in recent years they also acknowledge some of the administrative difficulties and costs that are associated with their relative smallness.

The CADISE institutions are all publicly designated higher education institutions as defined in legislation. They are 'specialist' institutions, which HEFCE has defined as those institutions which have more than 60% of their provision in no more than two of the Funding Council’s cost centres. When CADISE was formed within the total higher education sector HE colleges educated about 10% of all students and the market share in the areas of specialism in the creative arts represented 34%.6

The specialist colleges of higher education are both differentiated from their colleagues in general colleges and from their colleagues in Art & Design Faculties by virtue of their specialist status. As a result of the Sutherland Report (1998)6 most specialist institutions are in receipt of premium funding to at least an additional 10% in recognition of the range of cost factors associated with their specialist status and which was required to bring them within the funding tolerance band. It could be argued therefore, that this very fact represented a differentiation of arts, design and communication delivery in the specialist sector and acts as an extra lever and existence of specialist institutions. The table below illustrates the decline in higher education institutions and of specialist institutions, in particular, over a ten year period.

TABLE 1: DECLINE IN HIGHER EDUCATION COLLEGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE UK OVER A 10 YEAR PERIOD7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education Institutions in the UK</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education Institutions in England</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist UK Institutions</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 As reported in “Higher Education College: Excellent and Accessible” SCOP Article for the Parliamentary Monitor: November 1999.
6 HEFCE Report 98/10 – Panel Chaired by Sir Stewart Sutherland and continuation of premium funding for a further five years as reported in HEFCE 00/51 Report of the Specialist Institution Working Group.
7 Figures supplied by the Standing Conference of Principals, SCOP * These figures do not include schools/colleges of the University of London or the medical schools, many of which have been subsequently amalgamated with universities. They do, however, include the music conservatoires.
5.3 CADISE ‘DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT SKILLS’ PROJECT

To achieve the aims set out in the CADISE Heads of Agreement it was recognised early on in the partnership that, whilst each Chief Executive had experience and expertise of managing their own institution, the leadership skills required in order to manage a collaborative venture would differ from the autonomous skills of the traditional Chief Executive role. The ‘Developing Collaborative Management Skills’ project, therefore, set out with the explicit aims of focusing on:

- Developing skills in collaborative management to help Chief Executives embed an inclusive shared culture and technological leadership across the partner institutions.
- Developing a good practice model for the sector of specialist institutional collaborative management and examples of the benefits of a dedicated consortium.

(CADISE Stage 1 Project Proposal under HEFCE Initiative 99/54, October 1999)

Doz and Hamel have expressed the challenge of managing strategic alliances as:

...a wonderful test of general management skills – here purpose and flexibility, analytical power, entrepreneurial instincts and organisational and political skills must come together.

(Doz & Hamel G 1988: 32)

Motivated by the above, the final submission of the CADISE project under HEFCE Initiative 99/54 set out three distinct phases, including:

- A research element on the typology of models of collaboration in the HE sector, illustrating the range of activity from institutional or sub-institutional partnership activity for a single purpose, strategic alliances, confederal relationship through to merger activity and to assess whether CADISE could be positioned within the spectrum of relationship activity.
- Cultural mapping of the individual CADISE partner institutions, with a view to defining a collaborative culture and involving a series of CEO Workshops.
- Researching the impact of technology on managing collaboratively.

Whilst the first and third of these fell into distinctive stages of the project, the second was an iterative process that was to continue throughout the duration of the project. This gave a context for the research elements to be grounded and applied. The concept of defining a collaborative culture was seen as ongoing and a constant within the Consortium and would, of necessity, have evolved during any successful
consortium activity. However, the significant territories covered, and the momentum achieved in the Consortium through collaborative project working and Chief Executive commitment from the outset, have been noted as success factors in other collaborative contexts (Armacost: 2002). The timeframe, staged process, milestones to be achieved, and projected outcomes detailed in the proposal, all gave added focus, meaning and impetus, and in turn created a sense of urgency about the need for specialist institutions to act effectively in the current higher education dynamic.

6.0 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER AND CONCLUSION

This chapter has introduced the context for this study on collaborative management, the researcher in her role as practitioner-researcher and as an integral member of the CADISE Policy Group, the possibilities and parameters of the research study and background information about CADISE and the ‘Developing Collaborative Management Skills for CADISE Senior Executives’ project. The role of the researcher as practitioner-researcher is of central importance to the research and provides a unique contribution of watching ‘close-up’ the strategic deliberations of CEOs operating in a dynamic and turbulent higher education context for specialist institutions at the beginning of the 21st century. The corresponding challenges of this role are introduced through a preliminary exploration of the ethical considerations involved in such a task and will be further built upon in subsequent chapters on research design and methodology.

Within the chapter the primary and subsidiary research questions relating to an understanding of collaborative management in the higher educational strategic partnership context are articulated. In addition, there is signposting of the approach adopted in constructing three strands relating to: time in the development of a chronology; relational activity both in respect of the consortium relationship to HEFCE and inter-institutional relations amongst consortium members and finally and most importantly the learning through the practice of collaborative management. Theoretical constructs of strategic intent and the legitimacy of messiness that stem from a heterogeneous approach and a humanised approach to understanding collaborative management, both in terms of purpose and its practice have been introduced, and can act as a skeletal feature upon which the flesh of the research can grow.
1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter, the first of two on research design and methodology, explores the challenges of designing an effective study with a clear, relevant and intellectually worthwhile focus on the topic of 'how to' understand collaborative management. It takes as its starting point the key issues identified by Mason (1996:10) that researchers should be clear about what is the 'essence' of their enquiry, and should express this as an 'intellectual puzzle' with a clearly formulated set of research questions. Jennifer Mason distinguishes three kinds of question that may generate the type of intellectual puzzle which qualitative researchers would recognise (1996:15) and applying these to the context of this study of CADISE and collaborative management, they can be expressed as follows: -

- a developmental puzzle - how or why did CADISE and the concept of collaborative management develop?
- a mechanical puzzle – how do the skills, practice and concept of collaborative management work in the CADISE context?
- a causal puzzle – what are the external factors that have influenced the growth of academic consortia and CADISE in particular?

From these puzzles it is possible to link research questions, methodologies and methods in order to produce a coherent research strategy and one that is ethical, taking an account of ethics and politics in qualitative design research.

2.0 NATURE OF THIS STUDY

The nature and design of this study, places it as qualitative research, ethnographic and inductive, prompted by the bigger question of 'what is it that is going on here?' The macrostructure of the thesis is "the analytic story that you wish to tell" (Strauss and Corbin 1990:230) that collaborative management is different, is complex, can be made up of different strategic intents, is non-linear and 'messy', whereas the microstructure develops the analysis of particular topics according to three dimensions of 'policy', 'people' and 'process' that are three dimensions integral to this research case study.
When the seven Chief Executive Officers who formed CADISE embarked on the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project, their stated rationale was both to inform their practice in operating within a collaborative context and to produce a model that had the potential to be exported to other groups of institutions in the higher education sector. From my perspective, it was a feature of the research to try to explain and understand the 'new' phenomenon of collaborative management in a fluid and exploratory form, precluding a tightly circumscribed research design at the very beginning.

The research, therefore, employs a 'flexible design strategy' (Robson 2002:87) where the different traditions of case studies, ethnographic studies and grounded theory studies have been of particular relevance to real world studies. From the single case study of CADISE information has been collated employing a range of data collection techniques including observation, interview and documentary analysis. Ethnographic characteristics of the approach include the seeking to 'capture, interpret and explain' (Robson 2002:89) how the Policy Group experience and make sense of the context in which they are operating, both through the immersion of the researcher in that setting, and her engagement as a full participant observer.

Whilst it might have been appropriate to confine this study to that of a practitioner researching 'up-close' as a reflective practitioner/action researcher, the desire to produce a study that had credibility when researching 'from a distance' was also an important consideration. The potential to generate theory grounded in and emerging from the data for those contemplating collaborative relationships served as an underpinning aspiration and can best be represented as drawing on the methods and roles set out in the diagram below. Figure 2 seeks to show the continuum from practitioner 'closeness' to researching at a 'distance', emphasising movement back and forth and also illustrates related perspectives and methods of data generation.

**FIGURE 2: RESEARCHER METHODS/METHODOLOGIES FOR DATA GENERATION**
2.1 DEFINING METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

Research ‘methods’ in the context of this research are taken to mean the approaches used to gather data, and that in turn, provide a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and possibly, prediction. While traditionally the word ‘methods’ refers to those techniques associated with the positivistic model – eliciting responses to predetermined questions, recording measurements describing phenomena and performing experiments, within social science research it extends from normative research to those associated with interpretive paradigms, that is, participant observation, role-playing, semi-structured interviewing, episodes and accounts.

If ‘methods’ refer to techniques and procedures used in the process of data gathering or generation, the aim of methodology in the words of Kaplan (1973:) is:

... to describe and analyse these methods, throwing light on their limitations and resources, clarifying their presuppositions and consequences, relating their potentialities to the twilight zone at the frontiers of knowledge. It is to venture generalisations from the success of particular techniques, suggesting new applications, and to unfold the specific bearings of logical and metaphysical principles on concrete problems, suggesting new formulations.

The aim of methodology, therefore, is to help us to understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself. Moully (1978), in an attempt to provide a definitive statement of research, has suggested that it is best conceived as a process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. He sees it as a most important tool for advancing knowledge, and for the promotion of progress and for enabling people to relate more effectively to their environment, to accomplish purposes and resolve conflicts.

The research design of this study, therefore, is not an arbitrary matter and the research was conceived as an ethical enterprise, with the processes being conducted rigorously, scrupulously and in an ethically defensible manner.

3.0 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research is to discover how one can understand inter-organisational collaborative management in the higher education context and specifically from the perspective of the strategic considerations facing CEOs of the partner institutions engaged in their practice with CADISE.
The objectives of the research are, through my role as CADISE Co-ordinator, to provide:

- a description,
- an analysis; and
- an explanation,

of CADISE collaborative management via an investigation into the Chief Executive Officers' routine practice in the consortium (collectively known as the Policy Group) and focused through their further learning about the concept, skills and practice in the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. In both instances, the CADISE Policy Group members constituted the principal actors in devising and steering collaborative management, together with the CADISE Co-ordinator, and collectively they comprised the project team in the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project.

The study is context-specific and has the purpose of reporting subjective and multiple perspectives, attempting to give an in-depth portrayal of events. It analyses and interprets the uniqueness of real individuals and situations via the case study model and aspires to catch the 'complexity and situatedness' of behaviour (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000:79).

3.1 RESEARCH STRATEGY

The practice of this research on collaborative management has to be seen through the lens of naturalistic and interpretive methodology. This takes account of the notion posited by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:21) and quoted in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:3) who suggest that:

...ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions; these in turn give rise to methodological considerations; and these in turn, give rise to issues of instrumentation and data collection.

This recognises that research is concerned with understanding the world and that this is informed by how we view our world, what we take understanding to be and what we see as the purposes of understanding. In my search for 'the truth' about collaborative management, the first question to be addressed is my personal consideration of the nature and essence of things in the social world. With regard to my ontological perspective, there are many components that make up my social reality. The constellation of components that can be identified as elements of the phenomenon and process of collaborative management include:
• The Chief Executive Officers of the partner institutions (the CADISE Policy Group) as social actors, as well as autonomous institutional leaders and collaborative leaders in the process and policy context.
• Their language, actions and interactions in both external and internal settings, together with the language of collaboration prevalent in the external environment.
• Rationality, emotion, thoughts, feelings, memory, senses, understanding, interpretations, and ideas.
• Individual and collective motivations and visions.
• Other peoples' views engaged in looking at CADISE and the Developing Collaborative Management Skills Project and their 'holding of a mirror up to the Policy Group'.
• Actual experiences, accounts, texts, discourses, action, reactions, behaviours and events that occurred during the research period.
• Interactions observed during the course of the research such as social relations and networking, social or cultural practices, social processes that suggest one objective reality or multiple realities.

What was always clear to me was that the Chief Executives themselves were not the focus of the research but actors in it, and that through working back and seeking 'the truth' through the question of 'what was going on here?' part of the intellectual puzzle related to the complexities and intertwining of the collaborative management process, as well as environmental and political considerations and decision making. The puzzle may not have been just that specialist institutions appeared to want to collaborate in order to survive, but that there was also a stronger desire to collaborate in order to compete.

A spur of my interest in collaborative management was prompted by its emergence in a conceptual and practical form. If there was a need to understand, there was also the potential for the accompanying knowledge, to at least be part of a professional body of knowledge. This might even give shape to a 'profession' that could become more mainstream. In the forward to de Rond's work on strategic alliances in the pharmaceutical and bio-technology sphere (2003), Anne Sigismund Huff, Director of The Advanced Institute for Management at the London Business School, cites contrasting management approaches. At one end of a spectrum she talks about those management scholars who, following colleagues in architecture, medicine and engineering and from a design science management perspective, seek to create a
coherent language of practice, offering specific, empirically verified templates for application. In contrast, at the other end of the spectrum she cites those who form the critical perspective and are rooted in, but now rather independent of Marxist thought. The latter, she notes, finds the above more problematic. Henry Mintzberg (1975) and others act as first advocates of the view that too many management theorists tacitly assume their job is to support managerial action and ignore larger consequences and conditions. Whereas critical theorists might argue that management theorists have been standing too close (Zald:2002), design theorists argue that the stance is too far away. The different approach suggested by de Rond (2002) is a third perspective suggesting neither. He advocates instead that what is needed is "not more theoretical variety but theories of variety". ¹

With regard to management, it has been possible since approximately 1945 to trace its 'professionalisation'. Crainer (1998:4) in the introduction to his compilation on 'Fifty books that made management' recognises that management has aspired to a professional status per se, but that managers may remain slightly reticent and ill-at-ease with their 'profession which in turn leads to a craving for a clear set of guidelines on the skills and knowledge required to become a 'manager'. He advocates that if management is a profession, managers might seek a professional qualification of 'being a manager'.

While it is not an aspiration of this research to go that far, there is a sharing of Crainer's view that whereas in the past the quest for knowledge, new tools, techniques and ideas was part of the process of professionalisation, 'upskilling' in all these areas is now a feature of continuing professional development. Thus if knowledge means survival in the 21st century, managers cannot and should not be criticised for their constant search for new skills and new approaches.

This research hopes to capture through the CADISE case study, how among other things, CEOs undertook an exploration of new knowledge as part of their own professional development. However, quests for the 'new' and 'innovative' have to be balanced against the criticism that it is a feature of managers, that they are addicted to the newest and brightest ideas and that their approach is often characterised by a race to find the latest bright idea and the 'single-stop' answer to their immediate and short term business problems.

¹ as cited by Huff, A S, in the Forward of de Rond, 2003:xii
In the higher education context Peter Scott (2000:7) has said in terms of collaborations, partnerships and networks that in the 'Knowledge Age':

...coalitions, partnerships and networks are becoming more important than institutions.

Speaking in 2005 at the Association of University Administrators, he developed his views on collaborative frameworks in which universities can work together, drawing distinctions about stratification of institutions at different levels with different missions. For example, in conceptual or design principle terms there is a distinction between the Wisconsin model (favoured by Sir Howard Newby, Chief Executive of HEFCE) and Manuel Castell’s model of a network society in which the fluid connectivities are more important than the fixed points of connection. The latter would suggest a very different model of higher education in the UK, in which dynamics are more important than roles or missions and in which a stable hierarchy of institutions is difficult to sustain.

Moving on to a second key question in research design of what might represent knowledge or evidence of the social reality of understanding collaborative management and the possibilities and parameters of a higher education consortium, Mason has noted (1996:13), that these are epistemological questions. The theory of knowledge that I am developing in relation to collaborative management is inductive and can be known and demonstrated through the account generated of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project, the later interviews with members of the Policy Group as well as the participant observation of the Policy Group's concurrent practice of collaborative management, and the accounts of 'others' researching CADISE. Together an epistemology is formed of CADISE from:

- the personal constructs of the participants and their accounts and stories;
- my participant observation over a three year period of the work of the Policy Group; and
- summaries, annotation, memos and field notes that I have generated, as well as official and formal and information documentation.

In order to link research questions, methodologies and methods, Table 2 below sets out the data sources and methods generated for the research, together with a brief justification for each and how together they relate to the stages of the research in the
development of a chronology. They further link data from activity as a reflective practitioner in the role of practitioner-researcher and generated through fieldwork on collaborative management. The research evidence in turn relates to movement along the continuum of methods and methodologies for data generation, outlined in Figure 2 (page 25), which indicates the shifts in perspective from practitioner closeness as a reflective practitioner through to an empirical researcher, researching at a distance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</th>
<th>DATA SOURCES AND METHODS</th>
<th>JUSTIFICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the external factors that have influenced the growth of academic consortia and CADISE in particular?</td>
<td>1. Desk based research &amp; review of literature (Chapter 4 and 5) &lt;br&gt;2. Visits to models of collaboration, e.g., USA, Spain and construction of the project narrative &lt;br&gt;3. Field interviews of CEOs (Chapter 10)</td>
<td>1. &amp; 2. Review of typology/models of collaborative relationships via desk based research/visits to academic consortia will provide grounding factors (global higher education, UK higher education and small specialist institutional contexts) &lt;br&gt;3. Interviews/analysis with Policy Group members to provide accounts of perceived drivers for the growth of academic consortia/collaborative management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How or why did CADISE and the collaborative management concept develop?</td>
<td>4. Early CADISE documentation, recording events, meetings, critical incidents (Chapter 6) &lt;br&gt;5. HE Policy Literature: global; UK and small institutional contexts (Chapter 5) &lt;br&gt;6. Observation: through project &amp; concurrent CADISE experiences &lt;br&gt;7. Stories presented on external platforms (Chapter 8) &lt;br&gt;8. Field interviews by members of the CADISE Policy Group (Chapter 10) &lt;br&gt;9. 'Others' interviews, reviews and accounts of CADISE</td>
<td>4. Documentary analysis of early negotiations on CADISE and the project, together with researcher's recording of events will reveal reasons for formation and importance to CADISE of the project in order to help define collaborative management &lt;br&gt;5. Literature reviews as a function of practitioner researcher role in writing up the 'Developing Collaborative Management Skills' project will provide input into the project on models of collaboration &lt;br&gt;6. Own notes and narrative of account, minutes of meetings/emails/correspondence will provide data in respect of the development of the chronology and the particular relationship with HEFCE &lt;br&gt;7. Stories, principally by the Chair, to illustrate actors 'making meaning' of their situations through narrative and 'storied text' &lt;br&gt;8. To provide constructions of events, feelings, activities, motivations, concerns, claims, fact gathering and access of beliefs &lt;br&gt;9. Review of 'others' research on CADISE to reveal something about how they view collaborative management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do the skills, practice and concept of collaborative management work in the CADISE context and what lessons can be learnt from their experience?</td>
<td>10. Desk based research and research of the literatures (Chapter 4 and 5) &lt;br&gt;11. Visits to other models (Chapter 5) &lt;br&gt;12. CADISE Documentation, records of events, meetings, critical incidents &lt;br&gt;13. Observation: project account narrative/concurrent experiences &lt;br&gt;14. Stories presented on external platforms (Chapter 8) &lt;br&gt;15. Field interviews by members of the CADISE Policy Group (Chapter 10) &lt;br&gt;16. 'Others' interviews, reviews and accounts of CADISE</td>
<td>10. &amp; 11. Review of typology/models of collaborative relationships via desk based research/visits to academic consortia will provide grounding factors (global higher education, UK higher education and small specialist institutional contexts) &lt;br&gt;12. &amp; 13. Emergent practices of CEOs in the Consortium context as demonstrated through written documentation and observation by CADI/SEC-ordinator/PractitionerResearcher. &lt;br&gt;14. Observation of creation/build of external CADISE profile with peer organisations and reactions to it. &lt;br&gt;15. Personal constructs and reflections over period of the research by the CEOs. &lt;br&gt;16. Observations of others who were commenting on/interested in the model of CADISE Collaborative Management, serves as triangulation of the account data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 IS MY ENQUIRY ETHICAL?

Ethical concerns, as noted in Chapter 1 were high on the research design agenda in terms of the essence of my enquiry, because of the ‘privileged’ and ‘proximate’ role that I had as part of the CADISE Policy Group. However, ethical questions needed also to be addressed with morals and politics at the forefront of one’s mind because as Mason notes (1996: 29), in addition to the advancement of knowledge and understanding, the researcher must acknowledge that there may also be factors to do with personal gain (such as, for example, achievement of a higher degree, or a promotion or some standing in your discipline) that underpin a study.

My circumstances in combining a pre-existing commitment to doctoral study, and the almost ‘historical accident’ of coming from an academic business and management background into an arts and design context with the opportunity to research into a management topic, has to be noted upfront. For me, choosing to shift my research from a previously identified area for doctoral study, to one where access to data would be easier to generate as a practitioner, had to be balanced with the ethics of ensuring that I had informed consent not only for the topic, but for the ‘actors’ who necessarily were part of my research and to whom I owed a fiduciary duty. Care was taken therefore to ensure ‘ openness’ and awareness of the continuing nature of my research so that individual CEOs as well as the Policy Group collectively would have an opportunity to discuss and ask questions about the research if they should wish to do so and each member of the Policy Group signed a consent form to the research at the end of the fieldwork in 2004. Such openness about my research was also shared with others who were engaged in a facilitation or review role of CADISE and the project.

Key negotiated milestones gave rise to a number of points where pause for consideration of ethical issues occurred. These are outlined in Table 3, below and overall consent forms to the research by members of the Policy Group are included as Appendix 3.
TABLE 3 – NEGOTIATING TIMETABLE WITH CADISE POLICY GROUP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>NATURE OF DISCUSSION WITH CADISE POLICY GROUP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Agreement by CADISE Policy Group to Sponsor my research on CADISE and Collaborative Management as evidenced through the 'Developing Collaborative Management Skills Project' Discussion with Project Facilitators and informally with CEOs at November Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Discussion with Project Facilitators and informally with CEOs at April Workshop Discussion about PhD progress during appraisal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Report and discussion about progress on my PhD and narration of the account of the project. Request that CEOs as players be 'anonymised' (CPG Minutes: 20.06.02 Item 8.1) Discussion about PhD progress during appraisal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Individual interviews (approx 1 – 1.5 hours) with each member of the CADISE Policy Group as field research for PhD (June/July) Discussion about PhD progress during annual appraisal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Policy Group Decision: (September) to grant three weeks research leave to help progress PhD study Discussion about PhD progress during annual appraisal Signed statements of consent for satisfaction of University of Surrey Ethics Committee regulations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having ensured that the Policy Group were appraised of my research intentions at the beginning of my research, the first point for serious reflection on ethical issues occurred during 2001 when it emerged that one of the partner institutions was engaged in strategic deliberations that at the time were highly confidential. The university where I was registered for my doctoral studies was in a validating relationship with the particular institution, which could in the long term be affected. Whilst understanding the professional relationship of supervisor/PhD student, I could not risk breaching such privileged information and therefore supervision and contact with the supervisor that year was minimal until the moment had passed and when it was felt that a more public consideration of the issue was possible.

Two other ethical dilemmas that presented in the research related to the issues of visibility and identification of individual partners that could arise despite giving the individual members of the CADISE Policy Group pseudonyms in the narrative account and in the field interviews. This was due to individual characteristics that permitted identification: the first because the one music partner institution within CADISE could be identified from the nature of the interview discussion. If all references to music had been deleted, much of the meaning and import of the interview would have been substantially affected. When the interview was written up it was therefore checked with the CEO of the particular institution and his visibility pointed out to him in order to secure agreement that it could be included as it stood.

The second dilemma related to whether or not there should be a masking of a gender issues that occurred within the Policy Group or whether to let a female CEO voice be...
heard. Great care had been taken to give each CEO a pseudonym with professorial status and a genderless first name. The interview write up therefore implied that they were all male and each transcript was reported in the masculine gender. In the final round of field interviews the female CEO made certain assertions relating to gender and therefore the dilemma was whether to acknowledge this, which would have made her immediately visible and identifiable or to retain the anonymity, letting the statements stand, but gloss over what could otherwise have been a significant component in terms of collaborative management inter-personal dynamics.

The approach adopted was to send the interview to the individual concerned, asking her whether she wished to preserve anonymity in the way the interviews had been transcribed and were to be incorporated in Chapter 10, with the attendant glossing over of the gender issues, or whether she would prefer that her voice be heard as a female CEO and thus make her more identifiable. The result was an agreement to write from the perspective of seven genderless Chief Executive Officers.

These episodes illustrate the responsibility that a social science researcher has not only to their profession in a search for knowledge and quest for truth, but also for the subjects that are depended upon for their work. Whatever the outcome, and however valuable the individual and collective view of Policy Group members might be, there had been an undertaking to preserve confidentiality and a paramount consideration was the effect of the research on the participants. In summary, Cavan has defined this:

>a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others. Being ethical limits the choices we can make in the pursuit of truth. Ethics say while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better, even if in the extreme case, the respect of human nature leaves one ignorant of human nature." (Cavan.1977: 810)

With regard to considering some of the ethical dilemmas relating to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity, Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) see this as a conflict between two rights, which they express as:

>the right to research and acquire knowledge and the right of individual research participants to self-determination, privacy and dignity.

There had to remain an acute awareness of the fact that the members of the CADISE Policy Group were happy to be the subject of this research and without requirements of privacy in terms of the broad subject area of the research on collaborative management. Indeed, some members if not all, were keen proponents of the concept of collaborative management in public arenas and on public platforms, both nationally
and internationally. However, within the more detailed version of the research account in Chapter 8 and the field interviews analysed in Chapter 10, it was agreed at Policy Group that at the writing up stage, they would wish their confidentiality to be preserved as much as possible, subject to the individual provisos negotiated above.

Burgess (1989) has edited a collection of papers on 'the Ethics of Educational Research' and reflections on these by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) illustrate that the range of issues and the ethical consequences thrown up by the complexities of research are probably among the least anticipated. The researcher will frequently find that methodological and ethical issues are inextricably interwoven in much qualitative and interpretive research. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989:199) have suggested:

*Doing participant observation or interviewing one’s peers raises ethical problems that are directly related to the nature of the research techniques employed. The degree of openness or closure of the nature of the research and its aims is one that directly faces the teacher researcher.*

The questions that Hitchcock and Hughes pose have particular resonance with the context of this research. ‘Where for the researcher does formal observation end and informal observation begin?’ ‘Is it justifiable to be open with some individuals and closed with others?’ ‘When is a casual conversation part of the research data and when is it not?’ ‘Is gossip legitimate data and can the researcher ethically use material that has been passed on in confidence?’ As Hitchcock and Hughes conclude, the list of questions is endless, yet these can be related to the nature of both the research technique involved and the social organisation of the setting being investigated. A key to the successful resolution of such questions lies in establishing good relations. This involves developing a sense of rapport between the researcher and their subjects which will lead to feelings of trust and confidence. This issue takes on an even greater significance as my professional work is based on engendering trust and confidence. This is a clear example of an intersection of the research and my professional practice.

4.0 RATIONALE FOR USING THE CASE STUDY METHOD

A case study is a specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle (Nisbet and Watt, 1984:72). It is *the study of an instance in action* (Adelman et al, 1980). Case studies can establish cause and effect, and one of their strengths is that they observe effects in real contexts, recognising that a context is a
powerful determinant of both causes and effects. Case study has been around for a long time, and Hamel (1993) has traced its history within social science.

Sturman (1999:103) argues that a distinguishing feature of case studies is that human systems have a wholeness or integrity to them rather than being a loose connection of traits, necessitating in-depth investigation. Contexts are unique and dynamic, hence case studies investigate and report the complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995: 316) suggest that case studies are distinguished less by the methodologies that they employ than by the subjects/objects of their inquiry. They consider further that a case study has the following hallmarks (1995: 317):-

- It is concerned with a rich and vivid description of events relevant to the case.
- It provides a chronological narrative of events relevant to the case.
- It blends a description of events with the analysis of them.
- It focuses on individual actors or groups of actors and seeks to understand their perceptions of events.
- It highlights specific events that are relevant to the case.
- The researcher is integrally involved in the case.
- An attempt is made to portray the richness of the case in writing up the report.

Cautions have been sounded, however, in respect of ensuring that case study data is gathered systematically and rigorously. Nisbet and Watt (1984:91) argue that researchers should avoid journalistic pulls that permit picking out more striking features of the case and distort the full account in order and emphasises the following dangers of: dealing with only the more sensational aspects; selective reporting; finding evidence to support a particular conclusion; writing in an anecdotal style that subsumes in-depth rigorous analysis; pomposity and deriving or generating theories from low-level data and/or blandness; simply unquestioningly accepting only the respondents' views, or only including those aspects of the case study on which people agree rather than areas on which they might disagree.

Robert Yin (1981; 1994) has done much to resuscitate the case study as a serious option when doing research and as a single strategy. He sees it as encompassing both empiricism and holistic interpretation and defines it in the following terms: -
Case study is a strategy for doing research that involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence.

This emphasises the case study as:

- A strategy, i.e. a stance or approach, rather than a method, such as observation or interview.
- Concerned with research, taken in a broad sense and including, for example, evaluation.
- Empirical in the sense of relying on collection of evidence about what is going on.
- About the particular, a study of that specific case (i.e. the issue of what kind of generalisation is possible from the case, and of how this might be done).
- Focused on a phenomenon in context, typically in situations where the boundary between the phenomenon and its context is not clear; and
- Undertaken using multiple methods of evidence or data collection.

The central defining characteristic is concentration on a particular case that is studied in its own right. However, the importance of the context or setting is also important. Miles and Huberman (1994:27) suggest that in some circumstances the term 'site' might be preferable, because it shows that a 'case' always occurs in a specified social and physical setting and that individual cases cannot be studied devoid of their context.

Valsiner (1986: 11) claims that:

> the study of individual cases has always been the major (albeit often unrecognised) strategy in the advancement of knowledge about human beings'.

In a similar vein Bromley (1986: ix) maintains that:

> the individual case study or situation analysis is the bedrock of scientific investigation.

Until recently, Robson (2002: 179) noted that in commonly considered methodology texts, the case study was considered as a kind of 'soft option', possibly admissible as an exploratory precursor to some more 'hard-nosed' experiment or survey or as a complement to such approaches. However, in separating criticisms of the practice of particular case studies from what might be inescapable deficiencies of the strategy itself, Bromley (1986: xiii) points out that:
Case studies are sometimes carried out in a sloppy, perfunctory and incompetent manner and sometimes even in a corrupt, dishonest way.

TABLE 4: COMPARISON OF IDENTIFIED TYPES OF CASE STUDY

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<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exploratory – as a pilot to other studies or research questions</td>
<td>Descriptive – narrative accounts;</td>
<td>Ethnographic case study – single in-depth study</td>
<td>Intrinsic case studies – to understand the particular case in question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive – providing narrative accounts</td>
<td>Interpretative – developing conceptual categories inductively to examine initial assumptions</td>
<td>Action research case study</td>
<td>Instrumental case studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanatory – testing theories</td>
<td>Evaluative – explaining and judging.</td>
<td>Evaluative case study</td>
<td>Examining a particular case in order to gain insight into an issue or theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plus four domains of case study: ethnographic, historical, psychological and sociological</td>
<td>Educational case study</td>
<td>Collective Case Studies – groups of individual studies that are undertaken to gain a fuller picture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear that case studies frequently follow the interpretive tradition of research, seeing the situation through the eyes of participants and in turn this has rendered the case study an object of criticism, treating peculiarities rather than regularities (Smith, 1991: 375). He suggests that:

the case study method... is the logically weakest method of knowing. The study of individual careers, communities, nations and so on has become essentially passé. Recurrent patterns are the main product of the enterprise of historic scholarship.

In my research the case study approach was selected above other methods primarily because it has been proven useful when, as Cohen and Manion have stated (1994:66) it deals “with both documentary evidence, the tracing and study of relevant documents and records” and particularly when the subject under examination is “the researcher’s place of work....”

Lincoln and Guba, (1985:189) similarly point to the case as the main vehicle for writing naturalistic research and for whom ‘trustworthiness’ is defined in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The ability to provide thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) was something that I felt able to do as this would underpin the ethnography, catching and portraying to potential audiences what it would be like to be in the field. Lincoln and Guba further comment (1985:359) that the case is the ideal instrument for ‘emic’ inquiry (where the concern is to catch the
subjective meanings placed on situations by participants) and it also builds in and builds on the tacit knowledge that the writer and reader bring to the research. This, therefore, takes seriously the notion of the 'human instrument' in research, indicating the interactions of researcher and participants.

Hitchcock and Hughes further suggest that case studies:
- Will have temporal characteristics which help to define their nature.
- Will have geographical parameters allowing for their definition.
- Will have boundaries which allow for definition.
- May be defined by an individual in a particular context, at a point in time.
- May be defined by the characteristics of the group.
- May be defined by role or function.
- May be shaped by organisational or institutional arrangements.

Case studies above all, however, strive to portray 'what it is like' to be in a particular situation, to catch the close-up reality and 'thick description', (further elaborated by Lincoln and Guba 1985:359) of participants' lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings, for a situation. Hence, to accord with the point below made by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), it was important for the data generated for the study on collaborative management - for the events and situations that arise within the CADISE case study:

"to speak for themselves rather than to be largely interpreted, evaluated or judged by the researcher. In this respect, the case study is akin to the television documentary (2000:182)"

5.0 REVISITING THE ROLE OF THE PRACTITIONER-RESEARCHER AND STORY-TELLING IN AN ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

Because of the significance of my role as practitioner-researcher in the context of this research on collaborative management, some of the precepts underpinning the approaches and difficulties of a practitioner-researcher were explored in Chapter 1. In this Chapter, I wish to return to the role of the practitioner-researcher and to discuss the part that both 'stories' and the 'story teller' play in pursuing this research within an organisational context. The feature of the 'story' as an emotionally and symbolically charged narrative within CADISE can function at a number of different levels. For example:
As a valuable window into the emotional, political and symbolic life of the organisation and its landmark project, offering a powerful instrument for carrying out research.

- As a vehicle for organisational communication and learning for both internal and external stakeholders.
- As an aspect of leadership in terms of the way that leaders tell the story and create an emotional 'holding environment for staff' making it safe enough, but not too safe for an organisation to adapt to a changing environment.
- As a method that is part of a 'sensemaking' process that can be researched 'in situ' without the burden of needing to establish the validity of claims, the facts behind allegations, the truth behind the tales - the truth of a story lies not in the facts, but in the meaning. If people believe a story, if the story grips them, whether events actually happened or not is irrelevant.

Bauman (1986:3) suggests that stories are oral literature whose meanings, forms and functions are situationally rooted in cultural context, scenes and events that give meaning to action. Similarly, Bruner (1986) echoing the interpretive mode of educational research, regards much action as 'storied text' with actors making meaning of their situations through narrative. Stories thus have a legitimate place as an inquiry method in educational research (Parson and Lyons 1979) and indeed, Jones (1990), Crow (1992), Dunning (1993) and Thody (1997) place them on a par with interviews as sources of evidence for research.

Like so many theoretical concepts that are explored in this research, stories operate on more than one level within this study – the voices of the individual members of the Policy Group in their interviews when talking about collaborative management are telling their stories and providing rich, authentic, live data that can be 'an unparalleled method of reaching practitioners' mindsets' (Thody 1997:331). In contrast, as practitioner-researcher I am generating data through telling the story (the account) of the concept, practice of and experiential learning of the Policy Group in undertaking the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. At a third level, within the project itself the CEO Workshop facilitator urged the Policy Group to tell their own story about what attracted them to CADISE and to consider the collective story that needs to be told as a model of collaborative management and leadership to sustain the consortium.
The word ‘story’ shares a common etymology with ‘history’ – they both derive from a Greek group of words that include *histos* meaning ‘web’, *histanai* meaning ‘to stand’ and *‘eidēnai* meaning ‘to know well’. Yiannis Gabriel in his work on *Storytelling in Organisations* (2000) has offered the following explanation of storytelling as:

... an art of weaving of constructing, the product of intimate knowledge. It is a delicate process, a process that can easily break down, failing to live up to its promise, disintegrating into mere text ...good stories entertain, explain, inspire, educate and convince.

(Gabriel, 2000:3)

The resonance of this with my practitioner role, and the focus of how the organisational story could be integrated into my research design as an aspect of methodology, was one that appealed to me. However, the competing interests of ‘academic rigour’ and ‘storytelling’ were ones that caused me some concerns in terms of an approach that was academically acceptable. The need for my research to be seen as valid, reliable and objective combined with an awareness of the position suggested by Gabriel (2000: 135) that researchers who want to use stories as a research instrument “must be prepared to sacrifice at least temporarily some of the core values of the craft” and adopt instead a rather alien attitude towards their subjects and their texts, gave me some temporary misgivings. He continues:

They [researchers] must rid themselves of the assumption that quality data must be objective, reliable accurate, etc and must be prepared to engage personally with the emotions and the meanings that reside in the text. Faced with distortions and ambiguities, researchers must resist the temptation of ‘setting the record straight’; instead they must learn to relish the text, seeking to establish the narrative needs, and through them the psychological and organisational needs, that distortions, ambiguities and inaccuracies serve. At the same time, researchers must not lose sight of the relations between stories and facts: facts are not dissolved by stories but re-created through them.

Within the account in Chapter 8, my approach of reflective practice as a practitioner-researcher is based on observations of the CEOs in their practice of collaborative management within the consortium. This collecting of stories 'in situ' when and as they occurred can be seen as part of a broader ethnographic approach that would often be denied a researcher who did not have the same resources at her disposal because of the cost in terms of time and money. However, I was, through my practitioner-researcher role able to watch both the main story and sub-stories unfold as part of the CEO experiential learning within the *Developing Collaborative Management Skills* project as well as listening to their individual stories about what brought them to CADISE. This took place both within the parameters of the project
and later through semi-structured interviews that looked back at the period of the research and fieldwork.

Another aspect of structuring the story that leaders tell in order to link the external environment and the internal organisation is through using the framework of the content, context and processes of collaborative management. Such stories build up the picture of how the consortium arrived at the present position. The story also describes the emergent dangers or challenges in the external environment as a way to make sense of necessary internal changes, for example, what CADISE might have to become in order for specialist institutions to survive and prosper in the changing higher educational climate.

In Chapter 10, the findings from the semi-structured interviews and the data generated from the anonymised personal constructs of CEOs' individual stories, with the focus of eliciting their chronicles on collaborative management, resulted from a more distanced perspective for the researcher. It is argued by Gabriel (2000:138) that the traditional researcher's demeanour, attentiveness and reactions can play a decisive role in the generation of stories. Any display of a judgemental or critical orientation is likely to discourage storytelling. Gabriel further advocates the stance as one that is of a:

**fellow-traveller on the narrative, someone keen to engage with it emotionally, displaying interest, empathy and pleasure in the storytelling process. The researcher does not risk alienating the storyteller by seeming to doubt the narrative or by placing him or her under cross-examination, but conspires to detach the narrative from the narrowness of the discourse of facts, guiding it instead in the direction of free association, reverie and fantasy. Contradictions and ambiguities in the narrative are accepted with no embarrassment.**

The researcher concerned with stories may ask for clarification of particular aspects of the story, but the story-teller must feel that such clarification is asked in the interest of increased understanding, pleasure and empathy rather than in the form of pedantic enquiry. Another observation by Gabriel (2000:137) is that:

**the researcher, like a traveller, is subject to the narrative’s momentum, never seeking to control it or derail it, yet constantly and attentively engaged with it, encouraging it, sometimes nudging it forward, sometimes slowing it down...**

He further asserts that it is natural for the researcher who is looking at stories to be afflicted by doubt and anxiety about whether they are still on the narrative. Traditionally, it is suggested that stories might be framed for the benefit of the researcher, but in my circumstance, more often than not, it would be known that I
was privy to many of the incidents recounted. However, this did not preclude the fact that there emerged different accounts of the same story, which could then be compared as part of the research.

**SUMMARY OF CHAPTER AND CONCLUSION**

This chapter has presented an overview of the general research design and methodological approaches that are to be adopted in this study. It has reviewed, as a precursor to the next chapter on the research procedures, the location of the study as qualitative ethnographic research and one that is seen through the lens of naturalistic and interpretive methodology. In employing a flexible design strategy which incorporates both the case study approach and ethnographic characteristics it sets out the aim of capturing, interpreting and explaining how the Policy Group experience and make sense of collaborative management and how the role of practitioner-researcher immersed in that setting can add to that process though the research continuum of practitioner ‘closeness’ through to researching at a ‘distance’.

The chapter has been influenced by the approach of Mason who identifies the need for researchers engaged in research design to be clear about their ‘intellectual puzzle’ and to work through a number of questions. In this sense, the design of this study represents firstly, a developmental puzzle which relates both to the temporal and relational strands outlined in Chapter 1 and seeks to explore the subsidiary research questions of how and why the concept of collaborative management developed; secondly a mechanical puzzle related to the practice strand about extracting the lessons learnt from the research about the concept, skills and practice of collaborative management and finally, a causal puzzle about the external factors that have influenced the growth of academic consortia and CADISE in particular. The latter encompasses both aspects of the temporal strand and the relational strand.

Because of the requirements of validity and reliability that generate from the research design, attention has been paid to identifying clearly the required data sources and methods to be employed in undertaking and writing up this research. This remains of paramount importance to the legitimacy of the research in its complex ‘situatedness’ since it is important for the reader to be able to identify clearly along the research continuum when and in what capacity the data was generated. The rationale for using the case study method has been explored, together with a consideration of the
ethical challenges presented by the research design which involved the proximity and co-location of the practitioner-researcher, introduced in Chapter 1.

The final section of this chapter dealt with the role of story-telling in an organisational context. This concerns its role in 'getting to' deep rooted knowledge of beliefs, values and wisdom and creating the space to acknowledge and learn from feelings and emotions aroused by change. Within the research design it was noted that the feature of the 'story' as an emotionally and symbolically charged narrative within CADISE offered the potential to elicit data on a number of different levels. These include stories representing a way into emotional political and symbolic life, as a vehicle for organisational communication and learning for both internal and external stakeholders, as an aspect of leadership and management and perhaps of paramount importance, as an overall method that is 'sensemaking'.

In the following chapter, the procedures engaged in the actual process of research will be fully explained, examined and explored, with emphasis on the analytical methods and interpretation of themes from the research as well as how the literatures set out in subsequent chapters have been enfolded into the research.
CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH METHODS ACTIVITY

1.0 GETTING STARTED AND GENERATING QUALITATIVE DATA

As discussed in Chapter 2, the design of the research developed as the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project unfolded. The project provided the conceptual underpinning for ideas and learning about collaborative management while the Policy Group’s experience and learning about collaborative management paralleled the consortium’s development and formed a concurrent practice of collaborative management. It is therefore true to say that initially data was recorded and generated by me in my professional capacity as Co-ordinator of CADISE before, in fact, I decided that I would transfer my doctoral study to this topic. The practical approach and key milestones of generating data through my research period can be represented in the table below as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5 – TIMETABLE OF RESEARCH AND DATA GENERATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Former research on ‘Mixed Economy Further Education Colleges’ and their HE aspirations to ape Universities whilst employed at Croydon College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferral of PhD from September 1999 – August 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion with supervisor about changing context of research to my new circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CADISE contemporaneous activity (formed April 1999) and on-going activity after period of research, as a formal Consortium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaborating on themes: reflecting on practice, reflecting on research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sources of data available to me in my professional capacity included: summaries of early meetings prior to the formation of CADISE; annotations that I made to documents as I observed discussions and explorations on the part of the Policy Group to ‘make sense’ and to shape a common purpose; “memos”, as well as my own additional notes. When it emerged that I would transfer my research to a focus
on 'collaborative management', as practitioner-researcher, I embarked on field notes that I decided to record on a ten inch wide roll of wallpaper border, that I could literally roll out as the research unfolded. This had the advantage of being able to look from left to right to see development chronologically. Whilst my thinking was not refined in terms of how a doctoral thesis might look, I did record according to the following perspectives: Policy Group Activity; discrete Developing Collaborative Management Skills project activity and thoughts; a stakeholder perspective, particularly in relation to HEFCE, but also occasionally in relation to Regional Development Agencies, and the institutions themselves. These field notes also included my personal observations of activity and responses on the part of the Policy Group to external and internal events. In addition, as 'keeper' of the official and formal/informal documentation, correspondence, minutes and marketing material of a new organisation, I had a significant amount of data accruing and available to me.

1.1 USING MULTIPLE METHODS

I was able to adopt a multiple method approach of observation over an extended period of time, both as a full participant and as a participant observer; to study texts and documents to see how they were organised and used in relation to collaborative management; to engage in relatively unstructured and open-ended interviews and through analysing tape-recorded transcripts of the interviews to seek to understand how the interactions in collaborative management were organised. In doing this, I hoped to:

*Use different methods or sources to corroborate each other so that you are using some form of methodological "triangulation".* (Mason, 1996: 42)

The different methods that are outlined in more detail below have boundaries that can become quite blurred. For example, observation might result in the generation of visual data or the conduct of interviews. Also, multiple methods can be used to address the research questions, but it remains important to think strategically about the integration of multiple methods, rather than their being pieced together at random.

A large evidence base was generated over the three years of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project to address both the main and the three subsidiary research questions posited by this research. This was gathered through the observation process and in generating the subsequent account that drew on texts, documents and correspondence that had been used for internal purposes as
well as some that had been delivered on external platforms. This research material was routinely collected and reflected upon with observations made in field notes\(^1\), and together with the final interview data from the seven CEOs involved and transcripts of occurring interactions within the project, yielded both a rich volume and variety of research source material.

2.0 GENERATING QUALITATIVE DATA: OBSERVATION AND DOCUMENTATION

One of the key instruments of this research was the researcher's total immersion in the research setting as participant observer. This permitted systematic observations and dimensions of that setting, including interactions, relationships, actions and events both within the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project and in the Policy Group's practice of collaborative management. There has been much debate about how far researchers should and can participate in the situations they study and conversely whether it is possible or desirable simply to observe without participation (Burgess, 1982; 1984; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

I felt that I was in a privileged research position to be able to observe the Policy Group close up, including the reactions of 'others' to them, their actions and behaviours as well as interpretations and actions arising in their natural setting. My perspective would always be distinguishable from that of the rest of the Policy Group. However, what was always clear to me was that a consideration of the concept of collaborative management in real time would have been too complex to manage. Because of the complexity of subject and context, there was a need for a separate and finite period of research in one period and in order to be able to separate data and analysis, a second period to be able to reflect on and look back at data generated earlier. This in part was to counter criticisms sometimes made of qualitative research in respect of reliability (e.g. Hammersley (1992:67) has referred to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions) and additionally there is the charge of 'anecdotalism' often made in qualitative research when a few telling 'examples' are highlighted without, as Silverman (1989) has noted, any attempt to analyse less clear (or even contradictory) data. Bryman (1988) has further written about this problem in the context of the validity of qualitative research:

\(^1\) Even though in the earliest part of the project it was not contemplated that this would be PhD material, but data for academic writing in a shorter form as well as adding extra detail for the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project purposes.
There is a tendency towards an anecdotal approach to the use of data in relation to conclusions or explanations in qualitative research. Brief conversations, snippets from unstructured interviews... are used to provide evidence of particular contention. There are grounds for disquiet in the representativeness of generality of these fragments is rarely addressed.

(Bryman, 1988:77)

Because as a practitioner researcher I had, in research terms, an extended immersion in the field there would be a need to assuage a potential criticism that could be made about what Silverman has argued is:

a certain preciousness about the validity of the researcher's own interpretation of 'their' tribe or organisation.

(Silverman, 2000:11)

According to Hammersley, validity means:

truth interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents social phenomena to which it refers

(Hammersley, 1990: 57)

As a bolster to any charge of 'anecdotalism' within the research design, the opportunity to corroborate findings through looking at the 'accounts of others' independently researching and reporting on CADISE, together with the final set of interviews and CEO responses, was also incorporated in the research. These attempted to get a 'true fix' on what was emerging by combining different ways of looking at the phenomenon of collaborative management during the period of research and triangulating findings.

Through the observation of settings over a prolonged and sustained period, it is argued that situations and interactions would 'reveal data' that was possible for me to interpret as a 'knower' precisely because of my experience and immersion in the field. During the period of research and in my role of observer I had different capacities, statuses and roles. I had to remain aware of the impression that I wished to create as well as understanding the relevance of these things in the interactions, situations and settings that were being studied. I also had to remain aware of what to observe and what to be interested in from the perspective of the intellectual puzzle. For example, during the visit to the US where I accompanied two members of the Policy Group to the University of Wisconsin System- Administration, I had a role as active participant in questioning others involved in the US model of collaborative management, as well as being able to act as participant observer listening to the 'story' of CADISE as told by the two CEOs to an external organisation.
Thus, data gathering within respective settings has to be based on an understanding of how the researcher generates data selectively and with perspective, rather than assuming or hoping that one is not automatically doing so. The table below illustrates some of the shifting settings and perspectives that the researcher was engaged in along a continuum from fully participant observer to active participant.

**TABLE 6 - PERSPECTIVES FROM FULLY PARTICIPANT OBSERVER TO ACTIVE PARTICIPANT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity/Status/Role</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Position on Spectrum from Fully Participant Observer to Active Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CADISE Co-ordinator/Project Co-ordinator</td>
<td>Consortium Business/Developing Collaborative Management Skills Project</td>
<td>FPO 1 2 3 4 5 AP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Co-ordinator / Administrator responsible for recording visit details &amp; author of project report, book contribution and co-editor of CADISE Collaborative Management: Lessons Learnt</td>
<td>Group Visit to US Model of Collaborative Management</td>
<td>FPO 1 2 3 4 5 AP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Co-ordinator</td>
<td>Visit to European and UK Models of Collaborative Management</td>
<td>FPO 1 2 3 4 5 AP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant in CEO Workshops</td>
<td>Residencies and one day workshops during the 'Developing Collaborative Management Skills' Project</td>
<td>FPO 1 2 3 4 5 AP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant in Project / Policy Group Meetings</td>
<td>Varied from full interactive member of Policy Group re discussion/strategy formulation, through to more administrative functions as Co-ordinator</td>
<td>FPO 1 2 3 4 5 AP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant in 'Other' people/agency review of CADISE and Developing Collaborative Management Skills Project</td>
<td>More formal role as Co-ordinator supplying information, giving opinions when asked, supporting Policy Group positions</td>
<td>FPO 1 2 3 4 5 AP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY**
- FPO = Fully Participant Observer
- AP = Active Participant

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3.0 GENERATING QUALITATIVE DATA: THE ACCOUNT

The account of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project forms a narrative that covers a three year period. It is located in the interpretive, ethnographic paradigm which strives to get close to the data, to see situations through the eyes of participants, to capture their intentions and interpretations of new and complex situations, their meaning systems and the dynamics of the interaction as the project unfolded. The data is thus akin to the notions of ‘thick description’ from Geertz (1973) and his predecessor Ryle (1949).

The data collated over the three years that enabled the account to be written was large in volume and comprised my own personal observations and field notes, formal and informal documentation and correspondence relating to the consortium, project material that included transcripts of interviews made when visiting models of collaboration as well as internal and external project reports. Within the narrative of the account the layers of complexity needed to be captured as this data was about a group of CEOs engaging in a project about their good management practice in Developing Collaborative Management Skills. In turn ‘this research; is about ‘their research’ project in adding to the body of knowledge in this area and the shifts that would be required of them from autonomous to collaborative management.

Silverman (2000) has suggested that:

* telling the story in the order in which things happened is only appropriate for a natural history [methodology] chapter.

However, the chronological approach to the account in Chapter 8 was adopted as a structure to illustrate the range of relations and tie-ins which serve as a basis for the argument developed in the research. Through writing a straightforward chronological account in Chapter 8 and then going back to present findings and to analyse emergent themes in Chapter 9, it affords the reader the opportunity of making the journey through the ‘large’ and ‘small’ areas, the ‘immediate’, ‘medium’ and ‘long term’ decisions and strategy formation as well as unanticipated consequences of working in new territories.

Ethogenic studies that account for actions in slices of life have been championed by Rom Harré (1974, 1976,1977,1978) as ‘social episodes’. He identified a number of principles where he made a clear distinction between synchronic analysis (of social practices and institutions at any one time) and diachronic analysis (the stages and
processes by which social practices and institutions are created and abandoned, change and are changed). He advocates emphasis on the 'meaning' system that is the whole sequence by which a social act is achieved in an episode; that speech that accompanies an action should be intended to make the action intelligible and justifiable in occurring at the time and the place it did as part of the whole sequence of unfolding and co-ordinated action. Such speech is 'accounting' and in so far as accounts are socially meaningful it is possible to derive accounts of accounts. He believes that a human being tends to be the kind of person that his language, his traditions, his tacit and explicit knowledge tell him he is; and that the skills employed in ethogenic studies make use of commonsense understandings of the social world.

The procedures adopted in eliciting, analysing and authenticating the account in Chapters 8 and 9 were informed by the method proposed by Brown and Sime (1977) that involved paying attention to not only the actors or informants, but to the account gathering situation, the transformation of accounts through provision of working documents and data reduction techniques, the researcher and other researchers' accounts, as well as setting out control procedures for each of these elements. In combination with the 'free commentary' method that lies at the heart of an ethnographer's skills (employed and recommended by Secord and Peeters (1974)) distinctive insights were gained through the analysis of social episodes. 'Free commentary' probes for explanations of people's behaviour through getting below the surface data and searching for deeper, hidden patterns and in the context of the unfolding account of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project this was revealed when attention was directed to the way that group members interpret the flow of events in their lives. Through participation and observation and drawing on data from a variety of settings associated with the project, the project account and the ways in which the Policy Group proceeded and accounted for their learning, the case study gradually took shape.

It is important to set out, however, that there are a number of ambiguities and shortcomings in gathering and analysing accounts that counter some of the strengths of the ethogenic approach set out above. Menzel (1978) has discussed the problem of the multiplicity of meanings that may be held for the same behaviours, all of which may be valid simultaneously. He also raised actors' meanings as a source of bias, and questions how central a place ought to be given to them in formulating explanations of events. Panaceas to these problems include specifying 'to whom' the acts and situations have meaning, and the 'choices and responsibilities' in the
assignment of meanings to acts that the researcher has. Finally, he urges that explanations should respect the meaning of acts to the actors themselves, but that they need not invariably be centred on these meanings.

3.1 GENERATING QUALITATIVE DATA: INTERVIEWING

It was central to the design of this research to end the study with individual interviews with CEOs in the Policy Group. The aim was to tap into their experiences, accounts, interpretations, memories, opinions, understandings, thoughts and ideas on collaborative management and to examine how their emotions, feeling, behaviours, practices, and interactions influenced the processes of collaborative management. These interviews were fundamental to achieving a ‘moment in time’ snapshot of their reflections on the on-going process. They would provide first hand accounts and stories of the development of collaborative management through CADISE, and of the perspective of the relationship with HEFCE that it is suggested may be instrumental to the survival of specialist institutions. The interviews would also hope to capture the experiences and interactions involved in managing the concept, skills and practice of collaborative management.

Many of the obstacles that a ‘stranger’ researcher would encounter, or the obstacles in terms of the practicalities of prevailing on CEO time in getting an interview were circumvented through the privileged position of the researcher. The logic and rationale of ‘qualitative interviewing’ has been described by Burgess (1984: 102) as ‘conversations with a purpose’. Although this would shape the intention for me as interviewer and for the CEOs as interviewees, I was aware of the need to engage in detailed and rigorous planning. This was especially so in this situation as I perceived it might be a disadvantage that the CEOs knew me so well and if the opportunity presented itself, they could go off on tangential conversations that did not contribute to my intellectual puzzle, purely because they knew me. I wanted to work on the structure and flow of the interview so as to orchestrate responses that would help me with the areas where I wanted answers, yet at the same time allow individuals to feel comfortable ‘telling their story’ in response to the questions that were being devised.

3.2 THE PRACTICALITIES OF THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

The field interviews with each of the seven Policy Group CEOs were conducted over a six week period between May and July 2003 and the pro-forma of interview
questions that I devised as a prompt and as an aide-memoire is included in Appendix 4. The seven interviews each lasted between 50 minutes and 1.5 hours and generated a considerable amount of data, in line with the common understanding that qualitative interviewing can be greedy of resources both in planning and conducting of interviews as well as in analysis of the product. There was no planned order of priority of interview dates; they reflected diary availability in the determined period.

3.3 THE NEED FOR A PILOT INTERVIEW

Because of the significance of the interviews as part of triangulation in the study and the need to ensure, (despite the lapse of time)\(^2\) that the CEOs’ attention focused on reflecting upon the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project and concurrent business at that time (rather than current events within CADISE at the time of the interview), the format was piloted with a colleague who had been in attendance at one of the early project workshops, as part of her own professional development. She was familiar with the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. Although not a Chief Executive, she was an active participant in the work of CADISE, was a Senior Manager in one of the partner institutions and so could adopt an institutional as well as a collaborative perspective on the nature of the proposed questions and discussion areas and anticipate areas of ambiguity. As she was empathetic to the nature of my research and could see the potential for slurring of the boundaries of my research with current activity and developments (both internal and external to CADISE), the opportunity to rehearse and anticipate the pitfalls proved a valuable experience.

In particular, the practice interview tested whether the structure, style and content of my aide memoire would be likely to generate strong data, close down or enhance the possibilities of too much ambiguity, give an indication of how much data might be generated, and suggest how long it might take to collect and analyse the data. I recognised the importance of only having one shot at the formal interview in these circumstances and so needed to be absolutely clear about how I would react in escalating from the Co-ordinator capacity of my role within CADISE to setting the scene for interviewing someone I knew well, but adopting a stance of a researcher from a distance.

\(^2\) The interviews took place in a five week period between May/July 2003 although the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project had formally finished in February 2002.
3.4 CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEWS

With the exception of Professor Rhodes\(^3\) of Sunnybank Institute and Professor Pope of Holyhead Institute, the scheduled interviews took place in the CEO offices of their home institution. The interview with Professor Rhodes took place at a London hotel, following on from a meeting, and that of Professor Pope at the Coundon Institute. The reasons for the latter venue, related to the location where the interviewer was based and in terms of closer geographical proximity and diary availability for Professor Pope. The interview took place in Professor Avis' office at the Coundon Institute that had been lent to us for this purpose.

All of the interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed by a third party, (which was a time consuming process). In order to check for accuracy, and to fill in gaps in the transcription, each interview was re-listened to by the researcher and the transcript was checked against the tape. The sound quality of some interviews was variable, but all were decipherable and afforded original data.

### TABLE 7: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH CEOs FROM EACH PARTNER INSTITUTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashdown (Searie)</td>
<td>29.05.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryanstone (Close)</td>
<td>2.06.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priory (Diggins)</td>
<td>10.06.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coundon (Avis)</td>
<td>13.06.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earlston (Moore)</td>
<td>20.06.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnybank (Rhodes)</td>
<td>24.06.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holyhead (Pope)</td>
<td>04.07.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interviews took the form of semi-structured, open-ended interviews that fell into five sections. In order to achieve a fluid discussion and ensure generation of relevant data, on the spot decisions were made about variations to substance and style, scope and sequence, and more importantly what was really to be gleaned from each CEO. The aim was both to support the account (set out in Chapter 8) to produce a narrative and to understand the 'experience' of individual members of the Policy Group in the collaborative management of 'T'. This also afforded the opportunity to look at perspectives of interactions in macro, meso and micro contexts as well as the use of respective lenses to check broad understandings of policy through to miniscule detail about how behaviour in a particular context might affect process.

The sequence of questioning broadly followed the sections below, although as has been noted by Mason (1997: 45) the social task by the interviewer of:

---

\(^3\) At this point the pseudonyms for the Policy Group members and their institutions as adopted in Part 2 and Part 3 are being used.
orchestrating an interaction which moves easily and painlessly between topics is of paramount importance. Concurrently, there is a need to be able to make connections between relevant issues quickly, spotting and following up those which may be relevant, but which had not been anticipated.

Five sub section headings were adopted to act as an 'aide memoire' during the discussions and to structure the interview with the aim of both devising a train of thought, capturing the territories of the project and the individual CEO experience of the practice of collaborative management in the CADISE context. It was anticipated that this approach would be useful for the purposes of handling the diversity and volume of data generated and also that the sub section headings would act as an 'aide memoire in evoking relevant and meaningful responses. The structure of the interviews thus took place according to the following headings: -
- Concepts/Terminology/Understanding of Collaborative Management
- The External Factors for the Growth of Consortia in UK higher education
- Why the CADISE ('T') Consortium?
- Skills necessary for Collaborative Management
- Success Factors for Collaborative Management

The actual interviews with the CEOs commenced with a standard 'warm-up' explanation and question about terminology in collaborative management, which in six out of the seven cases in question was the starting point. Although most of the questions and sub-sets of issues were covered in the majority of interviews, inevitably the depth or breadth into which the interviewee went into them was not tightly controlled. This was because having decided the scope of my questions, how the interviewee interpreted them and the depth of their responses or otherwise was something that I wished to let flow naturally. Although I knew the subject matter well, in suspending my knowledge and beliefs for the purposes of the interview, I was able to gain new knowledge.

4.0 ANALYSING THE DATA

Whilst Denzin and Lincoln's (1994) description of the qualitative researcher as bricoleur suggests that qualitative researchers employ a variety of strategies and methods to collect and analyse a variety of empirical materials, Coffey and Atkinson (1996:189) believe that there are some basic principles that underlie the analysis of qualitative data, whatever particular approach is adopted. These include the researcher making well-informed decisions and principled choices in analysis, methodical, rigorous and careful data analysis. Both recording decisions and
documenting reflections and decisions are an unfolding process and produce data as a tool to think with. In addition, while the use of computer-aided software, can be employed to support a variety of analytical and representational tasks, e.g. searching for and retrieving data, the researcher has to remain aware of the limitations on methodological assumptions. Thus, the use of software should not be allowed to dictate all the ways in which a researcher interacts with the data and should always be subordinated to general analytic strategies and not be allowed to dictate them.

Coffey and Atkinson also emphasise that analytical strategies do not mean separation from all the other facets and phases of qualitative research, but rather that those should proceed throughout the development of the qualitative research project. Data should not accumulate without analysis or without generating and applying ideas about appropriate analytic procedures. Writing and representation are similarly not a distinct aspect of the research process, and it must be recognised that writing is inescapably linked with how the researcher reconstructs the social worlds that are being researched. Writing and representation cannot be divorced from analysis and so are analytical in their own right. Finally, Coffey and Atkinson caution about confusing research methods with theories or disciplines, reminding us (1996: 193) that research is pursued in the interests of developing disciplinary knowledge and that although types and forms of analysis may and should differ, careful attention to detail and scholarship and to the rigorous execution of the research should always be paramount.

4.1 VARIETIES OF PERSPECTIVE

As Strauss (1987:7) argues, qualitative researchers have quite different investigatory styles, let alone different talents and gifts, so that a standardisation of methods would only constrain and even stifle social researchers' best efforts. Huberman and Miles (1994) for example, define data analysis as three linked sub processes: data reduction, data display and conclusion, drawing and verification and describe it in terms of data selection and condensation. Similarly, Dey (1993) offers a view describing data analysis primarily in terms of identifying and linking analytic categories – a process of resolving data into its constituent components to reveal their characteristic themes and patterns.

However, the approach preferred and adopted in this research focuses on Wolcott's (1994) description of what analysis means. This suggests a different way of thinking
about how we explore and interpret qualitative data. He uses the term 'transformation' to describe a variety of strategies, with the term 'analysis' being restricted to a more specialised meaning. In arguing that qualitative data can be transformed in different ways and to different ends he breaks up the methods into description, analysis and interpretation.

Thus, in this research the description follows from an underlying assumption that data should speak for themselves. The analytical account of the data should stay close to the data as they were originally recorded, although as Wolcott recognises there is no such thing as pure description as it takes a human observer to accomplish description. Nevertheless the goal of description in Wolcott's terms is to tell the story of the data in as descriptive a way as possible. This approach is adopted in the narrative of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project and concurrent CADISE activity (Chapter 8) and in the narratives and stories generated through the interview data with individual members of the Policy Group.

Analysis in Wolcott's terms refers to a specialised way of transforming data, rather than being an all-encompassing term: that is the process by which the researcher expands and extends data beyond a descriptive account. It includes a careful and systematic attention to the data, identifying key factors and key relationships. Analysis, for Wolcott, is therefore cautious and controlled and structured, formal, bounded, systematic, grounded, methodical, particular, carefully documented and impassive. This formed a useful template for my research, one which I subscribed to, but also one that challenged me constantly in terms of passive objectivity within the methodological framework I had adopted and particularly in relation to my analysis of the 'account' in Chapter 8.

Wolcott's emphasis is on the search for themes and patterns from the data. It involves systematic procedures to identify essential features and relationships. As much as anything, Wolcott is describing the work of data management, which in this research is significant and employs concepts and coding, narratives and stories as represented through the actors production, contextualised experiences and personal knowledge in narratives and other genre and the representation or reconstruction of

4 Whilst there may be elaborate distinctions between stories and narratives in research literature, the simple approach adopted here is that of Riessman (1993: 17) of "doing research with first-person accounts of experience".

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social phenomena through analysing and writing to create accounts of social life and construct social worlds.

Wolcott describes his third way of transforming qualitative data as interpretation: where the researcher attempts to offer his or her own interpretation of what is going on. This has been undertaken in Part 3 of the thesis: Reviewing, Themes and Fit with Framework (Chapter 11). Within the interpretation, according to Wolcott, the understanding and explanation are sought "beyond the limits of what can be explained with the degree of certainty usually associated with analysis". In contrast to 'analysis' in Wolcott's terms, interpretation is freewheeling, casual, unbounded, aesthetically satisfying, idealistic, generative and impassioned. Wolcott (1994:36) heralds interpretation as the threshold in thinking and writing "at which the researcher transcends factual data and cautious analysis and begins to probe into what is to be made of them".

The distinction between Wolcott's approach and that of Huberman and Miles (1994) and Dey (1993) is that he does not envisage description, analysis and interpretation as necessarily part of one overall schema to be applied in its totality in all cases. He does not see description, analysis and interpretation as being mutually exclusive. The transformation of qualitative data can be done at any of the three levels or in some combination of them and different balances can be struck.

Tesch (1990) identifies a number of key characteristics of qualitative data analysis that can be viewed as commonalities of the analytical process and suggests some regular features, that are discussed by Coffey and Atkinson (1996: 10): for example, analysis is a cyclical process and a reflexive activity; the analytic process should be 'comprehensive and systematic, but not rigid;' data are segmented and divided into meaningful units, but connection to the whole is maintained; and data are organised according to a system derived from the data themselves. Tesch points to the flexibility of analysis and to the absence of rules about how it should best be done. It has been suggested that analysis implies being artful (Guba & Lincoln, 1981) and playful (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Tesch maintains that this does not mean that analysis is a structureless process, nor that it should be done inattentively and sloppily. Qualitative data analysis requires methodological knowledge and intellectual competence.
5.0 DATA MANAGEMENT

There are two closely related processes in data management: the first is managing the data generated by reducing its size and scope in order to be able to report upon it adequately and usefully, and secondly to analyse the managed set of data, by abstracting from it and drawing attention to what is felt to be of importance or significance. Techniques employed for managing data in this research included coding, annotations, narrative and stories, labelling, selection of key events and summaries. The approach adopted was to manage the data along the three dimensions identified at the outset of the research of 'policy context', 'people' and 'process'. By deconstructing the data in this way and coding within this frame the many overlaps, layers of complexity, temporal, relational and practice factors could be more clearly delineated and examined before being holistically viewed.

5.1 CODING PROCEDURE

From early thought and observations about CADISE and the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project, (and before my research interest transferred to the area), a 3 'P' process model emerged that steered my thinking on the project and identified the three dimensions of:

- policy contexts in higher education,
- people (leadership/management) dimensions and relationships.
- processes to support collaborative management.

My thinking was influenced by parallels between 'P' models of strategy formation prevalent in management literature (e.g. Mintzberg, 1998; Ghoshal and Bartlett, 1994). This process model also reflected early discussions with the Developing Collaborative Management Skills CEO Workshop facilitator who indicated his approach of the requirement to manage the context, the content and process of collaboration. The three dimension 'P' model appeared to be a useful mechanism for ordering and data handling in the first place and later proved to be a robust platform to see how various dimensions of the research intersected and had impact on the overall process of collaborative management. It also dovetailed with the three subsidiary research questions in that:

- The policy contexts broadly aligned with the external factors and drivers that influenced the formation of academic consortia;
• The people dimensions and relationships in part served as a framework for looking at what led the individual membership of the Policy Group to forming CADISE; and
• The processes to support collaborative management gave a shell within which to identify the concepts, and emerging practice and process of collaborative management from the research.

Other keywords/themes emerged that could be used to mark the texts, and influence coding categories. Many of these coincidentally started with ‘P’, such as politics and purpose in the policy context, the role of personality, perception and perspective in the people dimension and matters such as planning, rates of participation and progress as process issues. Attention was needed to ensure that the coding was not adversely affected and the research influenced by the particular ‘P’ ‘convenience’, but at the same time this did allow ways of interacting with and thinking about the data. Seidel and Kelle (1995:58) capture this by saying that:

"codes do not serve primarily as denominators of certain phenomena but as heuristic devices for discovery."

The suggestion by Miles and Huberman (1994) was adopted that data extracts employ a code list created by the researcher prior to reading the data. This “start list” was a useful way of beginning to code.

As is commonplace, the codes chosen had the effect of conceptualising coding not merely as data simplification and reduction, but data complication: expanding, transforming and reconceptualising data and opening up more analytical possibilities. Strauss (1987) similarly advocates coding as an essential analytical procedure and views it as fundamental to conceptualising the data, raising questions and providing provisional answers about the relationships among and within the data and discovering the data. He argues that coding should be used to open up the inquiry and move toward interpretation acting as a route towards the excitement and inevitable payoff of grounded conceptualisation.

"Codes represent the decisive link between the original 'raw data' that is the textual material such as interview transcripts or field notes, on the one hand and the researcher's theoretical concepts on the other."

(Seidel and Kelle, 1995:52)

Many analyses of qualitative data begin with identification of key themes and patterns, and in this study as with other research, it was important to be able to
organise, manage and retrieve the most meaningful bits of data. The assignation of tags or labels to the data based on concepts (within the 3 'P' paradigm set out above) acted as a process to condense the bulk of data into analysable units by creating categories within and from the data. Coding, therefore, became part of the process of analysis of observations in the account, in the reports of 'others' reviewing and commentating on CADISE and to a lesser extent in the field interviews. By attaching codes and generating concepts, the important function took place of enabling rigorous review of what the data was saying.

It has to be remembered, however, that collaborative management is new and emergent and one of the primary purposes of this research is to scope the area and its application within a higher education perspective using a 'wide lens'. This precludes drilling down to all the interesting avenues that present themselves. Links established by the analytic procedures generated by coding (e.g. different segment or instances in the data) within a 'P' dimension were brought together to create categories of data that related to the particular topic or theme. The coding thus linked all those data fragments to a particular idea or concept, which in turn related to the other 'P' dimensions. Codes, data categories and concepts were closely related and together were used to generate the important work of establishing and thinking about processes to generate ideas. These are thoroughly and precisely related to the data and set the stage for interpreting and drawing conclusions.

5.2 NARRATIVES AND STORIES

This section focuses on the narrative qualities of qualitative textual data and seeks to achieve a balance that could be lost if long and complicated accounts were chopped up into separate coded segments, and used only as suggested in the section above. As Atkinson (1992) in his work on understanding ethnographic texts has suggested, stories "counteract(s) the culture of fragmentation." The role of stories as part of my research design was discussed in the previous chapter and facilitates the exploration of context in interviews, field notes as well as preserving the 'form' of qualitative data. Together, the project account drafted by the researcher, the accounts of 'others' incorporated into the narrative and the interviews with each individual CEO were an opportunity to clarify and to give 'a voice' to a collective process of story telling as part of the practice of collaborative management. Such narratives also open up the possibility of looking at the ways in which accounts and stories are social and culturally managed and constructed. As an analytical process, narratives and stories
assume a place because through them the researcher can look at the ways in which the social actors, produce represent and contextualise experience and personal knowledge through narratives.

Although at the time I devised the interview schemata, I had not been consciously and deliberately taking the stance of eliciting stories, it is interesting to note that when mapped against Yiannis Gabriel’s checklist of questions that he suggests should be undertaken “sincerely and unpatronisingly” (Gabriel: 2000: 138), there was a strong alignment. He advocates that researchers may elicit stories by asking questions such as:

- Can you recall any incident that was widely discussed between yourself and your colleagues?
- Can you recall an incident that made you laugh/concerned/sad/proud/angry?
- Are there any special characters in this organisation, any stories about them?
- Are there any special days or functions?
- Are there any special stories about the organisations’ leaders/founders?
- Are there any parts of buildings or other locations you associate with specific incidents?
- Can you think of an incident that sums up to you what it means to be part of this organisation?
- Can you think of an incident that sums up the stresses and strains of this role?
- Can you think of an incident that you discussed outside the workplace with your partner or friends?

Gabriel notes that many of these questions may generate factual answers rather than stories and that some individuals at least in the early parts of an interview, stick to the facts either because of defensiveness or for other reasons. He further adds that the skilful researcher can sometimes overcome such inhibitions, steering the conversation in the direction of story and fantasy with questions like:

- What exactly did this incident mean to you?
- Did anyone read the situation differently?
- How did you feel at the time? How do you feel about these events now?
- What did the incident show about the way the organisation treats its members?
- What would you have done if you were in the position of that person?

It is to be noted that in retelling experiences, the Policy Group were individually representing a chronicle of their experiences within CADISE in terms of a series of
events, happenings, influences and decisions. They would thus be articulating how the past was related to the present (Richardson: 1990). Time is placed into a personal history, where the past is given meaning in the present. Thus social actors organise their lives and experiences through stories and in doing so make sense of them. This chronicling of a life, or part of a life, often starts from a point of 'how it all happened' or 'how I came to be where I am today'. How, for example, the Policy Group told about the processes and practice of collaborative management, how in responding to the questions they chose to structure their account could also provide perspectives of the individual in relation to the wider social grouping and cultural setting. This would also express and indeed enact – the social conditions of power and influence in everyday talk.

The context, however, in which these stories were being generated could be seen as potentially problematic. It must be noted that the 'oral performance' and giving a 'voice' was located within an interview format and to some extent was prompted. As noted by Coffey and Atkinson (1996:76) "the performance quality is to some extent bounded by the answers to prompted questions". Thus, even within the context where I was working with CEOs, who knew that I knew them, they were telling me their stories in certain ways and were giving a performance of sorts to me. Their narration of events could reveal a lot to me about how they viewed their social and cultural settings. It was also possible that the kinds of stories and narratives that they were producing to me had been and would be recounted in other settings – there would be reminiscences, some of which could or should have been rehearsed either as part of a private repertoire of recollections or as part of a collectively shared stock of narratives.

The collection, therefore, of stories and personal narratives through the field interviews are part of literary and cultural norms that relate to the form of the story. They are not naturally occurring but are part of a set of culturally specific mechanisms for the constructing of textual representations and should not be divorced from their location as social constructions within power structures and social milieux (Emihovich, 1995, Goodson, 1990). They are shaped, formed and told according to connections and cultural understanding. As Passerini (1987:28) argues:

when someone is asked for his life story his memory draws on pre-existing story lines and ways of telling stories, even if these are in part modified by circumstances.
The writing of qualitative research has never been monolithic and has reflected differences among disciplines (e.g. sociology, and anthropology), rational academic styles and the influences of subject matter. In recent years social scientists have begun to reflect critically and self-consciously on how they produce texts and the result has been to write up research as an analytical and not a straightforward task. Thus the writing up of the data enables the researcher to think about it in new and different ways.

Reflections on the possibilities and practices of analytically writing up the data generated from the study paralleled the incorporation and role of ‘reading’. There was the question of how an active and analysis-oriented approach to “the literature” could become an important part of the recurrent process of reflection and interpretation. This was especially so, when so much of the nature of what was being researched was eclectic, multi-faceted, and indeed was being considered within a broad spectrum of being “messy”.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) commend the creative use of written sources in producing and elaborating analytical concepts and urge the requirement to read and employ such literature in order to generate ideas and analyses. The approach adopted, therefore, in writing up the analyses was to broadly separate the three main data generating approaches (the account based on participant observation and fieldnotes from current day to day collaborative management practice; data from the accounts of ‘others’ who had been involved in observing, commentating or reviewing CADISE; and the final round of interviews from the members of the CADISE Policy Group) and to employ different analytical methods. The different lenses employed in doing this and the levels of generality for conceptualising the analysis ranged from a broad perspective across the chronicling of CADISE, through to a close-up of the practice of collaborative management and sought to set out the complex territories and contextualising elements of the field. Reflecting on the levels of generality focuses thought both on the conceptual frameworks that are engaged with and the intellectual fields to which a contribution can be made.

The account was analysed within the discrete dimensions of policy, people and process before reconstructing the component to form general analytic perspectives of the temporal, relational and practice strand that had been previously identified as a
way to make sense of the data. This afforded the opportunity to embrace sensitising concepts and theoretical constructs that had been gauged from the range of literatures reviewed and critiqued in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. These included, inter alia the twin parallels of strategic intent and the legitimacy of messiness in alliance evolution (and management) and the process and practice literature relating to the people, process and policy context dimensions.

The intended audiences of readers of this case study are likely to be those who would want to find out more about the practice of collaborative management, those contemplating such relationships and policy makers and agencies. As Coffey and Atkinson suggest (1996:118) sometimes such audiences are entirely implicit and the outcome of a lack of reflection on the author's part, whereas on other occasions the author/analyst has made an explicit decision about the implied readership and hence couches the interpretation accordingly. In this research, if there is a middle way between the two, I have adopted it, where I have a sense of diverse audiences, but have not pitched or created the analysis as a result of a decision to write for a particular audience.

Both the interviews and the perspectives of 'others' recounted in this research are analysed in terms of writing and representation, and contribute to categorisation and analysis through narrative and stories. In addition, and bearing in mind the complexity of the project, layers within layers, research within research and different dimensions and modes of analysis, there is an attempt to incorporate a variety of graphic and visual representations across all the data where this makes it easier for the reader. So for example, in the account, for the sake of ease for the reader coming cold to the layers of the research, a chronological summary of each year represents milestones in the project, milestones in the annual operation of CADISE and meetings and other operational forms. Whereas extended textual passages, such as long extracts from interviews or field notes or documentation of process are one kind of display, Miles and Huberman (1994:11) have noted that better displays are a major avenue to valid qualitative analysis. They list matrices, charts and networks among those representational devices and the fact that they act as heuristic devices for the researcher in the course of the analytic process. It thus enables the reader to see more clearly "what is happening" and visual representation has been used wherever it was felt that it would be beneficial.
Theorising is integral to analysis and is not a separate stage in the research process. The conduct of qualitative inquiry is always firmly based on empirical research, but good research is not generated by rigorous data alone. Thus, in addition to coding and retrieval of data fragments and the formal analysis of narrative structures, there is a requirement to go beyond the data to develop ideas: that is the process of generalising and theorising. This can range from Dey's thinking (1993:51) that describes theory as "simply an idea about how other ideas can be related" and how respondents' views influence what they think is happening, through to what Silverman (1993) has posited as a broader framework of ideas to be understood and explored in the context of how they provide different, fruitful ways of thinking about qualitative data. My theorising extended to suggesting that it is possible to derive from the data an implementation model to support those contemplating collaborative management relationships.

Theorising cannot easily be separated from analysis. Silverman (1993:46) notes:

*we only come to look at things in certain ways because we have adapted, either tacitly or explicitly, certain ways of seeing. This means that observational research, data collection, hypothesis-construction and theory building are not three separate things but are interwoven with one another.*

Glaser and Strauss (1967) draw an important contrast when they distinguish between formal theory that is generic in scope and substantive theory that in turn makes sense of a particular social context. Initial theorising in this research is derived from the close investigation of the practice and process of collaborative management in strategic partnerships, in the higher education policy context. This results in a theory about the template of skills that are required when embarking on and engaging in collaborative management in the local setting of the research, as well as engaging with formal ideas at a more general level. Thus, beyond the data and beyond the original setting of the research, there can be ideas that are derived from and relate to social settings of many kinds. Theoretical ideas can and should inform the coding of data and conversely, a careful examination of codes can help generate theoretical ideas, but it would be unwise to assume that there is a single approach to theorising, or that theory can be built by the aggregation and ordering of codes.

In Chapter 11, I review the findings, themes, categories and the fit with the research framework and reflect on practice. At this point in the research I felt able to engage in some deep interpretation of the data generated and to put forward a model of collaborative management and the necessary skills that future leaders might need to
employ. This draws on the findings of the research and acts as a both a conceptual and practical starting point for those who are contemplating embarking upon or engaging in collaborative management and other relational forms of activity. The emergent themes, patterns and processes from the case study can be re-formulated as a skills template of how to understand and handle collaborative management and one that incrementally builds on the platform of the policy, people and process dimensions. It identifies a cluster of nine related skills, indicates that the process of collaborative management is in the main part pluralistic and non-linear and also attempts to shade the skills employed in collaborative management from those that are 'hard' and most commonly used in rational corporate management, to those 'soft' skills that are an absolute prerequisite for collaborative management.

8.0 REACHING CLOSURE

The conclusions in Chapter 12 reflect on the research questions posed in this study and addresses how far the findings provide satisfactory answers. The scale and approach to this research was always ambitious in wishing to deconstruct in detail the policy, people and process approaches, and it was often thought that any one of these could have provided ample data for a doctoral research study in its own right. However, because the notion of collaborative management, was continually emerging as more robust and popular during the period of research, and continues to be one where academic reflection is following its practice it was important to the researcher to take a broad perspective and research each of the policy, people and process dimensions to provide one potential routemap that might lead others to undiscovered paths of future investigation.

The aim was to scope the territory and capture the parameters of the phenomenon of collaborative management, making a new and original contribution to knowledge. It seemed to me a paradox throughout to be wanting to deconstruct and present in some kind of orderly and rationale way what was going on with collaborative management, when the whole premise of my thesis was resting on the complexity and multi-stranded nature of melding different CEO strategic intents and the legitimacy of the messiness honing in on multifaceted strands, and a fair portion of serendipity.
SUMMARY OF CHAPTER AND CONCLUSION

This chapter has set out the actual timetable and process of research and data generation and the methods (multiple) applied in conducting the research. It has looked at how participant observation underpinned the generation of the account together with various forms of documentation accessible to the researcher, employing transcripts of CEO interviews on visits to models of collaboration, data generated from the accounts of 'others' management and the personal constructs of each CEO on collaborative management. It discusses why and how the methods of analysis and interpretation apply practically as well as why such methods were adopted. The researcher's varying roles and perspectives (from fully participant observer to active participant) are highlighted as a unique opportunity to research both very closely and from a distance.

The practical process of managing the significant volume of data, coding the account and writing up and analysing the personal constructs of the Policy Group CEOs is explained as well as exploring and examining in detail the practicalities of using narratives and stories in ethnographic texts to provide rich data. Not just the volume but the complexity of the messages and meanings of the data generated is contextualised within the ambition of scoping the new and emergent area of collaborative management and discovering where its parameters are set. Finally, discussions on how the research aspires to move beyond the data to generating a potential model that can be used by those engaged in or contemplating collaborative management activity is set out, prior to returning to the research questions set out in Chapter 1 and assessing how closure on the research study is reached.
CHAPTER 4 – COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT LITERATURE REVIEW (1) -
SCOPING AN HE POLICY, PROCESS AND PEOPLE APPROACH:
PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

At the time that the first trawl of literature to underpin this research was undertaken, it was evident that there was not going to be one body of literature that clearly delineated what the CADISE Policy Group had identified as ‘collaborative management’. What literature and commentaries there were on collaborative management in education seemed to lie principally in literatures based on the US experience of academic consortia, isolated examples in the school and educational contexts in New Zealand, and international examples of consortia formed for reasons based on research and disciplinary allegiance or thematic partnerships. However, during the period of this research academic writing and analysis has increased both in quantity and quality, producing and making possible a more theoretical approach to understanding alliances and interorganisational activity.

The next three chapters start to locate ‘collaborative management’ through a review of relevant literature in the education, business and management fields. After presenting a general overview of the literature in which to nest an understanding of collaborative management, the chapters proceed to consider the three distinct dimensions identified as components of managing collaboration in this research. These are literatures relating to the ‘higher education policy context’ (Chapter 5), to the ‘people’ or human agency dimensions that are integral to understanding the uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity of operations in collaborative management (Chapter 6) and finally to the collaborative management ‘processes’ – a somewhat neglected area to date (Chapter 7).

The quest for a clear and shared strategic intent has been identified as an underpinning theme for this research or at least the loose coupling around a shared purpose, even though individual CEO intents might have been different. It is suggested that a common purpose is central to the vision and mission of a collaborative at its inception and remains a facet of collaborative management practice that requires a constant revisit in order for the collaboration to thrive. Other key considerations include the development of processes that underpin an understanding of the concept, skill and practice of collaborative management and an
awareness of environmental factors, such as, for example, the notion of collaborating to compete.

2.0 LOCATING THE LITERATURE ON COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

In the UK, there is an increasing range of further and higher education policy documentation that encourages collaboration and partnerships and imply that interorganisational activity and the growth of academic consortia are an important dimension. While academic partnerships and institutional relationships have long existed in some shape or form, for the purposes of this research a policy line on the ‘imperative’ to collaborate in the UK, can be traced from the Dearing Report, the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (1997) through to the White Paper ‘the Future of Higher Education’ (2003) and the subsequent Higher Education Act 2004. However, as an area of emerging research, academic writing on strategic partnering has suffered from limitations in scope. What research there is focuses on reasons for alliance performance, borrows economic models from business and often studies only part of an organisation’s network. There is little empirical investigation and no definitive body of research on the process area although there is some evidence that serious attempts are being made to rectify this, including the focus of this research case study.

Sifting through the indexes of the burgeoning literature and case studies in the higher education management section of bookshops and catalogues at the beginning of the period of this research, one could only find sparse reference to ‘collaboration’, ‘cooperation’ ‘partnership’ or ‘consortium’, despite the fact that collaborations and partnerships are an important theme in both further and higher education policy, featuring both Higher Education and Further Education Funding Council strategic plans. Exceptions do exist: for example, Abramson, Bird and Stennett (1996) wrote extensively on partnerships in further and higher education; Watson (2000) has honed in on competition, collaboration and ‘complementarity’ as a means of demonstrating how the academy must adapt to the needs of its rapidly changing host society as well as to a more diverse and plural internal community and Duke (2002) devotes a chapter to managing through co-operation in his work on Managing the Learning University.

Additionally, reports and documentation to assist senior and/or project managers about collaborative experience and process are beginning to appear in formats
ranging from ‘self-help’ checklists (for example, Guidelines on Managing Collaborative Projects, (2002) produced by the National Disability Team) or other so-called ‘cookbook remedies’ (Duke, 2003: 5). Partnership has been cited as ‘the hallmark’ (Duke 1992: 21) of the Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE), and despite Duke’s description of the CIHE as ‘a new, intendedly short-lived voluntary association of a few of the great and good’, some thirteen years later it continues to exist and publish reports on behalf of its partnership of vice-chancellors and senior industrialists.¹

If one wished to focus directly on the area of collaborative management in higher education, it is clear that no one coherent body of literature exists, so there is a need to identify ‘grey’ literature produced in articles or published on the world wide web where often lively discourse is taking place on aspects of alliance formation, alliance success and interorganisational activity. An alternative is to think laterally and take a ‘sideways glance’ at a broad spectrum of educational management and policy texts to draw out the themes that might contribute to building a solid foundation for the area.

However, if one turns from education to business and management texts, reference to the concepts of ‘collaboration’, ‘cooperation’, ‘partnership’ or ‘consortia’ appear much more frequently and have continued to appear over the period of this study. This is especially so within the literatures relating to strategic alliances, the broader assessment of the impact of globalization, change and relational activity and drawing on a number of private and public sector experiences. Despite some attempts at integrating such literature (e.g. Oliver: 1990) a drawback is that this is a highly fragmented field, lacking a comprehensive view, specifically on the empirical side. The particular focus on the concept of strategic alliances and ‘collaborating to compete’ in the area of biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries (James, 1995; de Rond, 2002; de Rond, 2003) provides a wealth of information. A conceptual and theoretical framework is also widespread in the field of information and communication technology (e.g. Schrage: 1995) and more recently in the health sector (e.g. Wright et al: 2000).

Collaborative management literature draws upon a number of related disciplines and often identifies the contradiction and tensions that exist between managerial and academic discourses on collaboration and the difficulties of management in what has been termed "a competitive, opportunistic, individualist and power driven world" (Josserand, Clegg, Kornberger, Pitsis: 2004: 37). No single thematic approach has dominated the literature and become the ascendant theory, despite the growth and adoption of cooperative strategies, nor is there a single disciplinary area such as anthropology, sociology, philosophy, psychology, politics or management that can be turned to as the grounding home territory. Indeed, it has been suggested that part of the richness of alliances and networks comes from the broad range of disciplines and perspectives that can shed light on them conceptually and practically.

In a call for papers for a Special Edition of *M@r@gement* (2005) featuring papers on interorganisational alliances and networks it was suggested that in the field "extant research has opened as many avenues as it has settled questions" To 'get at' and explore the practice of collaborative management, a multi-disciplinary academic approach needs to be taken. For the purposes of this research, this was found mainly in writings about the practice of management and a number of disparate micro-studies on alliances, partnerships and consortia in higher education. The sparsity of focused writing in the context of alliance research within higher education institutions has led to an adjacent set of questions for the researcher to explore and in the search for answers, a broad net has been cast across many aligned disciplinary areas. Specifically, considerations have involved:

- whether there are any other researcher(s) who have studied the same territory of management practices in collaboration, and if so, what is the 'new' contribution of this research?
- where does this work fit in with what has gone before?
- why is this research worth doing in the light of what has gone before?

3.0 CONSTRUCTING A BODY OF COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT LITERATURE - A ‘POLICY’ ‘PROCESS’ AND ‘PEOPLE’ APPROACH

The initial literature search conducted, for 'the study within a study' that this research represents, was conducted as a precursor to and as part of the *Developing Collaborative Management Skills* project, funded by HEFCE. It commenced with an investigation of various models of collaboration and the identification of a wide-ranging literature base to support this. While at a later stage, the backbone of
literature was compiled, read and published as part of the project publication on *Collaborative Management: Lessons Learnt* (Goodwin and O'Neil (2002)) scoping the literature was an important starting position, giving a good idea of relevant work carried out by others in the UK and elsewhere. During the period of this research, however, there have been many developments in and much discourse on the area of collaboration and the drawing together of a fragmented literature and observations on both existing studies and glimpses of forthcoming academic work have been incorporated wherever possible.²

It has been of paramount importance to 'manage' the literature in the sense of working logically through the strands that can be woven together to form the tapestry of collaborative management for higher education institutions. This becomes more complex and multi-layered as reflections take place on the range of literatures required in order to fully understand the components and dimensions of collaborative management. Formal constructs, the observable manifestations of collaborative management in terms of knowledge generation and material resources, and the ideology and emotion involved in evolving and defining a collaborative culture are all pertinent to the research and therefore need to be grounded in appropriate literature.

The thread running consistently through the research is that collaborative management in higher education can be considered across a number of related dimensions: that of policy contexts and perspectives; processes to support the management of collaboration; and the dynamic of people (leaders) and their relationships. In other words, the possibilities and parameters of partnership and collaborative management in UK higher education, from the standpoint of CADISE, requires an examination of literature to explore:

- the external higher education policy context from a global, UK higher education and small HE institutional perspective and an evaluation of how the policy context impacts on specialist institutions at a particular time and location.

- the people context, that is the leaders who are at the heart of this process, their mental maps and the evolving group processes and dynamics of their relationships as a collaborative culture evolves.

² For example, at the time of writing up this research the publication of an anticipated key text, *A Handbook of Strategic Alliances* is awaited (eds Oded Shenkar and Jeff J. Reuer, Newbury Part, CA: Sage Publications, forthcoming Autumn 2005).
the processes that support effective management of collaborations with a focus on organisation development and a review of strategy formation literature that focuses on the individual and shared purposes behind partnership. Examples of process from both partnerships and strategic alliances in business and from an educational context are drawn upon.

Adapting the diagram used in Chapter 1 (Figure 1: page 18), the literature relating to the implementation of collaborative management can be represented as the intersection between the external environmental context and the internal people dimensions of co-operative strategic management. My approach is to consider literature in the two outer rings as part of Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 (those of higher education 'policy' and the 'people' context of collaborative leadership) before addressing separately 'process' literature as part of Chapter 7. As each of these dimensions in themselves are dynamic, emergent and multi-faceted, they present additional complexity in terms of capturing their ambiguity and uncertainty. In combination, their sum represents 'messiness' both in theory and practice.

FIGURE 2: AN APPROACH TO COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT LITERATURE

Before embarking on the first two dimensions of policy context and people, however, it is necessary to clarify terminology in relation to the language of collaborative management. This must be done to ensure a common understanding, for the researcher in setting out the territories to be explored, and for the reader in understanding the loci and foci of the research.

The section below on the language of collaboration also aims to illustrate the ambiguity that can arise in a new and emerging multi-relational dynamic. To avoid differences of meaning and interpretation that may stem from the language of collaboration and collaborative management forms, an indicative typology of collaborative relationships prevalent in UK higher education, is set out at the end of the section below.
4.0 DEFINITIONS, DISTINCTIONS AND A TYPOLOGY: THE LANGUAGE OF COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

There appears to be no agreement over the terminology that should or could be used to classify forms of collaboration, or indeed management in this context. It may also be that the two words ‘collaborative’ and ‘management’ are uneasy bedfellows. Questions can arise as to what collaboration is and whether collaborative management does exist as a separate and identifiable phenomenon. Further, are there particular skills involved and can they be easily undertaken and/or learnt? Indeed, it is interesting to muse on whether collaborative management should be singled out in this way, or whether as a prime leadership task of institutional executives, it should remain subsumed within the blanket term ‘management’. Does ‘collaboratively managing’ mean the same when it is used in relation to managing ‘a collaboration’ in relation to something else, such as a distinct product or process? Can collaborations, such as academic consortia, be managed in the traditional sense of control, or indeed are they something just to be nurtured where the words ‘facilitated’ or ‘developed’ would be more appropriate? (words that seem to be more commonly applied in this context). It has been suggested by the facilitators of the CADISE CEO Workshops in the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project (Roberts and Dumas: 2000), that perhaps management conforms more to ongoing processes of:

...adaptation (to changing circumstances), navigation (anticipating potential difficulties), mediation (of interpersonal and interorganisational relationships), and providing explanations (of why partnerships, alliances or consortia exist and what is expected of those involved in them).

In this research it is clear that this lack of a common understanding and shared schemata, in combination with the ambiguity and imprecision of particular words and their different contexts add to the difficulty of achieving a common understanding about what it is that is being discussed and targeted. It is, therefore, important to review some of the definitions and interpretations of language commonly used in relational activity, both to understand the ambiguity that can arise and to clarify the usage and meaning of such terms within this research.

That point being made and subject to the distinctions below, it is important to recognise that in this research and often for no other reason than to improve readability, terms such as ‘alliance’, interorganisational relationship’, ‘collaborative relationship’, ‘collaborative venture’, ‘collaboration’, ‘partnership’, ‘strategic alliances’...
and 'cooperative relationships' are used to refer (essentially) to the same phenomenon: that is where two or more organisations voluntarily engage in a meaningful and durable exchange, sharing co-development of new knowledge, products, services or technologies.

4.1 ‘COLLABORATION’ AS PART OF COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

If one looks at the dictionary definition of 'collaboration' it states that it can be traced back to its Latin roots of 'laborare' meaning to work together, especially in some literary, artistic or scientific undertaking. However, during the World Wars in the first half of the 20th century, the word collaboration took on a more sinister meaning – "to co-operate with an enemy invader" and this expanded definition found its way into the Oxford English Dictionary where it is defined formally as to:

1. work jointly, esp. in a literary or artistic production
2. cooperate traitorously with an enemy

Perhaps as a feature of my age, born after the second world war, should someone have mentioned "collaboration" prior to my taking up a post in collaborative management in 1999, the meaning I would have attributed to the phrase would not have been in the former sense, generating a 'feel-good' factor, but more the latter, suggesting a spirit of competition and collusion rather than co-operation. While, rationally I might see the possibilities and parameters of a 'win-win' situation, at an emotional level there would also be potential for forms of collusion as a means to an end.

One definition of collaboration taken from the influential work of Barbara Gray (1989:5) is that interorganisational collaboration is a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible. The effectiveness of the best collaborations result in synthesis (an area explored in more depth in Chapter 7), implying successful inter-relations between two or more organisations. Gray argues that the degree of synthesis that can be achieved between the different organisations is critical. Similarly, Huxham (1996) defines such collaboration as a process through which organisations exchange information, change activities, share their resources and enhance capacity for mutual benefit and a common purpose by sharing risks, rewards and responsibilities. Achieving synthesis in collaborative management is thus important both for this process...
(strategic practice) and for outcomes (results of practice as observable manifestations).

4.2 PARTNERSHIP AS A FORM OF COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

Partnership as a form of collaboration is a term that has come to be used very loosely and can refer to almost any kind of a relationship between individuals or groups, but for the most part suggests relationships entered into with honesty, openness and integrity. Thus straightforward contracting relationships are quite often described as ‘partnerships’. A question pertinent to this research is whether a partnership necessarily requires active engagement in the principles and practice of collaborative management or not – that is does it need to be actively and formally managed? For me, with a background as an undergraduate in law and a profession originally as a law lecturer, the legal definition of partnerships was second nature, that is that a partnership is the:-

relationship which subsists between persons carrying on business in common with a view to profit

(Partnership Act, 1890, section 1)

This legal definition suggests the existence of a partnership, whether there is such active involvement of not. For some twenty years I was able to review this definition of a partnership through my Company and Partnership Law lectures, deconstructing it according to the fact that there must be persons (more than one!) they must be carrying on a business in common (the same business, as opposed to different entities) and there must have been a view to profit (even if profit was not achieved). I enjoyed the moment when students realised that partnerships could exist in law even without two people recognising that they were in a legally binding relationship, and the myth that a partnership was always a document carefully drafted by some lawyer, was shattered. Also, there was the fact that if a partnership existed, by choice or by implication, the partners were in a regulatory framework where certain legal management rules controlled the relationship unless they chose to vary it themselves, and even in that event there were some fundamentals that could not be changed.

An alternative rigorous definition that also distinguishes the wider conception of ‘partnership’ from the precise legal definition and is borrowed from public sector development literature, describes an informal network of sub-contracting in French industry:
...partnership entails a long-term commitment and reflects a condition of mutual dependency where both client and subcontractor are in a position to influence the other by their behaviour. Partnership is a set of normative rules, determining what behaviour is permissible and what constitutes a violation of trust. The rules are designed to facilitate exchange in a situation otherwise open to exploitation.

(Lorenz 1989:189 quoted in Robinson, Hewitt Harris 2000 Ch 10)

This can be compared with a statement from a discussion of highly successful value-adding partnerships (VAP) in industry and business:

... for a VAP to exist, its partners must adopt and adhere to a set of ground rules that generates trustworthy transactions.

(Johnstone and Lawrence, 1988:201)

It can be seen, therefore, that partnership can be used in different contexts and has different connotations according to its loose (as used casually in common parlance) or tight (according to a legal definition) location. As illustrated in the small cross-section of definitions above, its descriptors range from the reasons why the relationship was formed, through to the requirement of 'profit', the depth of commitment in either time or dependency, a determinant of behaviour, or the definition can move into the emotional territories of trust and/or its violation.

4.3 CONSORTIA AND COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

The link from partnership to consortia can be made easily as the original meaning of consortium derives from the Latin word 'consort' and means 'partnership'. In deconstructing terms at an international conference on 'Academic Consortia' (1998) de Wit talked about the plethora of terms in use apart from consortia, including those such as 'association', 'network', 'league', 'group' as well as that of 'strategic alliance' – the most popular term in the world of business. All of these words are descriptors of multilateral co-operation in higher education and have been used in a very piecemeal way in the sector globally. De Wit points to the Oxford Dictionary definition of 'consortium' meaning '... an association, especially of several business companies'. He continues in his comparison of dictionary definitions pointing out that the Cambridge Dictionary describes consortia as:-

... 'an organisation of several businesses or banks joining together for a shared purpose'. The immediate connection is thus made with the business sector. In comparison, the Penguin Business Dictionary describes a consortium as 'a group of companies or firms none of which is competent to fulfill a contract alone...'. Generally, a 'once only' combination bringing
together a number of quite different operational skills or areas of specialized knowledge.


Writing recently on the UK context of the consortia approach to Foundation Degrees and issues of dispersed management, Smith & Betts (2000) posit the following definition. They talk about consortia and partnership in the same breath and see:

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partnership as distinct from a more loosely defined relationship or association, or even co-operation, [and it] implies the conscious and active participation of all partners, albeit at different levels and possibly at different times in a partnership process.
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The authors further caution and cite from their earlier work that:

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Sleeping partners who merely sign up to good ideas in which they have no intended continuing stake or involvement devalue the idea of partnership.
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In the consortium movement in South Africa, Gibbon and Parekh (2001:27) assert that consortia have a shared understanding of their role as encompassing at least the following:

- Acting as disseminators of and “clearing houses” for information of relevance to members.
- Providing a forum for the discussion of policy and other matters of common interest.
- Managing or facilitating all collaborative activities and projects agreed to by members.
- Promoting joint activities to optimize the use of higher education resources and enhance the administrative, teaching, learning and research activities of institutions in the region.
- Acting as representatives of the institutions, when appropriate, to government, donors and other groups.

In the US in the early 1970s, Patterson (1970) working in the Kansas City Regional Council for Higher Education created a national network of academic consortia – initially the Council for Institutional Leadership, (today the Association for Consortium Leadership - ACL) and he formulated a definition that can be used as a gauge and still has relevance today. He said that academic consortia form for the sole reason of serving their member institutions and share five distinct characteristics. These are that they are:

- Voluntary, not the result of regulatory or statutory mandate.
- Multi-institution, not merely bilateral agreement.
- Multifunctional, not single-purpose.
- Beneficiaries of long-term member support.
- Managed by a substantial professional staff team.

Broadly stated, the mission of any consortium is to enable the members to achieve together, through co-operation, what cannot be achieved alone. The consortium arrangement supports its participants through shared risk and reward, whilst at the same time strengthening the capacity of each partner to pursue its unique institutional mission.

It has been said that academic consortia are in the fortunate position of already having the organisational form most suited to the global era - the network. This, in turn, takes us to another common descriptor that leads to 'fuzziness' in the language of collaborative management - that between consortia and networks. Networks may or may not have organisational form and it is important to draw a distinction between the verb 'to network' and the noun, 'a network'. Networking is one aspect of academic consortia, and in many ways what academic consortia display is a 'deep structure of networking organisations' (Francis: 2002).

4.4 NETWORKS AND COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

It would appear that 'networks' in contrast to partnerships, are "the organizational form of the 21st century" (Pettigrew and Fenton, 2000) and an emerging form and model of how consortia can operate. They are seen as involving networks of relationships among firms that are engaged in the production, distribution and use of goods and services. The Oxford Dictionary defines networks as:

"a group of people who exchange information, contacts and experience for social or professional reasons" or as "a group or system of interconnected people or things.

The Cambridge dictionary in turn calls a network:

"a large system consisting of many similar parts that are connected together to allow communication between or along the parts or between the parts and a control centre.

In the business context Johanson and Mattsson (1987: 256) further stipulated that:-

There is a division of work in a network that means that firms are dependent on each other. Therefore, their activities need to be co-ordinated. Coordination is not achieved through a central plan or an organisational
hierarchy, nor does it take place through the price mechanism, as in the traditional market model. Instead, co-ordination takes place through interaction among firms in the network in which price is just one of several influencing conditions.

Manuel Castells (2000: 5) has said the following of the value of networking:-

In the information age, the critical organisational form is networking...Networks are the appropriate organization for the relentless adaptation, and the extreme flexibility that is required by an interconnected, global economy, by changing economic demand, but constantly innovating technology, by multiple strategies of various actors (individual, cultural, political) creating an unstable social system at an increasing level of complexity.

Networking within a formal network is an essential characteristic of consortia and it is what gives them the flexibility and ability to be innovative and proactive, to advance projects at appropriate times and abandon or relocate them at others. It is also what gives them a capacity to be alert and instantly responsive to changing conditions in ways that elude fixed organizational structures. More than anything, it gives them the ability to make links and connections between individuals and groups and to leverage the resources of a higher education system to make a significant contribution to this process.

4.5 ALLIANCES AND COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

The definition of a strategic alliance is commonly recognised and understood in the business world. For example, Vyas, Shelburn and Rogers (1995) have adopted the following definition:

A strategic alliance is defined as a relationship between companies involving a sharing of common destinies, [and] is regarded as a viable means to excellence in the global marketplace.

Various classifications of strategic alliances are made by other authors (e.g. Forrest & Martin 1992; Gomes-Casseres, 2004) and each makes his/her own distinctions. It has been noted by de Rond (2002: 22) that there is an implausibility of a 'one-best-way' and that inside organizations, at the level of the individual, one might meet potentially inconsistent and multifaceted natures of human agency.

Individuals act neither in a vacuum nor in a wholly determined fashion. Rather their conduct is likely to be partially voluntaristic and partially fashioned by the raw materials of culture, tradition, prejudice, loyalty, ambition, personality and experience. Moreover, human agency may be heir to inconsistent value systems, contriving to stick to a belief in both the morality of motive and that of consequence.

(de Rond, 2002:23)
Noting the difficulties in interpreting success or failure in alliances because of their lack of specification, Zajac (1998) suggests that the term "alliance" has become host to a gamut of different interorganisational arrangements including, among others licensing agreements, contract alliances, outsourcing arrangements, non-equity research collaborations, equity joint ventures, consortia and even mergers and acquisitions. This raises the question of whether in studies of business alliance dynamics and performance such research is comparing 'like-with-like' – given imprecise definitions, this can be difficult to tell.

What is clear is that alliances reflect the complexity, relative unpredictability and heterogeneity of their environments. There emerges a dynamic and socially complex arena that can be interpreted as anathema to traditional business principles in which management theory takes charge and which must be explained in those terms. Traditional approaches to such studies have suggested linear development and orientation with a generic sequence of predictable life cycle stages, more open-ended iterative process models (teleological approaches), evolutionary models, explained by reference to the environment as the principal motor of changes and a more recent charting of alliance instability and failure by Das and Teng (2000) through examining the internal tensions: that is conflicting forces of cooperation versus competition, rigidity versus flexibility, and short-term versus long-term orientation. I return to these issues during the consideration of literature relating to process in Chapter 7.

4.6 THE 'MANAGEMENT' IN COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

In reviewing the term ‘management’ as part of collaborative management and as distinct from the mere existence of partnership, or the facilitation and development of collaborative relationships, this section divides itself into three distinct approaches, informed by literature from a business, management and higher education perspective.

Further distinctions can be drawn between the terminology relating to the business of partnerships and co-operation under consideration here, and the definition of 'collaborative management' offered at the beginning of Chapter 1 (page 5). That definition suggested a process involving two or more higher education institutions or individuals who enjoy autonomy (within the case context of this research, that is
those who are designated specialist institutions) and who have made a commitment
to work together to build on their commonality and complementarity within a
recognized collaborative framework. The distinction between this and the legal
definition offered in the Partnership Act, 1890, centres on the relationship formed
'with a view to profit' although a common sense approach would suggest that within
the concept of a working consortia, the notion of profit would be in achieving the
mission or intent of the relationship and whether it is achieved or not is coincidental.

4.7 THE CASE OF "COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT" IN A PUBLIC SECTOR CONTEXT

The first approach is taken from definitions of 'collaborative management' found
within the American and New Zealand public sector. It is only in this context that
direct references to 'collaborative management' emerge, and specifically in relation to
its use in connection with collective bargaining in the US and school working in New
Zealand. Rubin, Rubin & Rolle (1999:518) offer a definition in the US context,
presenting a conceptual model for collaborative management as:

\[
a \text{joint process where both employees and their employer share in managerial decision making.}
\]

A little later on in the same article, it is slightly re-phrased as:

\[
a \text{process in which represented employees and their managers share jointly in decision making responsibilities.}
\]

(1999:520)

Although this is one of the rare instances where collaborative management has been
written about as a defined and conceptual arena, the definitions are somewhat
tautologous although the focus of management in the context of active decision
making is illustrative of the language of 'managerialism'. The premise behind this
type of collaboration is that organisational management theorists have suggested
that collaborative management improves labour-management relations in the public
sector (Kearney 1996) and can satisfy both organizational and individual needs as
well as build lasting relationships between managers and employees (Kearney &
Hays:1994). According to Cooke (1990), the extant literature is generally "descriptive,
impressionistic and piecemeal in focus" suggesting that there is an unmet gap for
more definitive and conceptually oriented research.

Cooke has also noted that research in this area has failed to reveal what factors
determine successful collaboration or induce the establishment of cooperative
arrangements, whilst Bennett and Delaney (1993) have similarly observed that some
researchers have identified variants of collaborative management with organizational improvement, although 'a conceptual understanding of the dynamics of collaborative management is lacking'.

The direct use of the terminology in an analogous context to that of a formal UK higher education consortium is helpful and serves as a useful comparison for purposes of this research, but it can already be seen that common vocabulary is being applied to both the practice of collaboration in respective contexts and to the more general descriptor of collaborative management, without clearly distinguishing between the two.

Distinguishing 'collaboration' from the 'collaborative management' of it, becomes important if one thinks of 'collaboration' as the noun or even the adjective for the body of practice in what Elfring and Volberda (1998) have described as an emerging 'boundary school' of strategic management of partnerships, compared to 'collaborative management' representing the practice of it - the verb. Another way of putting this is that collaborative management is a derivative of collaboration: the difference being that one learns or writes about the range of relational activity as a form of co-operative strategy making, in contrast to the body of skills and knowledge in collaborative management referring to the 'how to' and perhaps more importantly the 'how to do'.

4.8 DERIVING A TYPOLOGY OF RELATIONAL ACTIVITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The language of collaborative management can be applied, therefore, to a range of alliance relationships from informal academic associations between groups of individuals, through strategic alliances and partnerships to more formal recognisable forms, such as federations and confederations, and may go as far as merger relationships.
There can be subtle distinctions in meanings when words are used in one context rather than another. For example, a sub-text of this research is the context of economies of scale and merger, the former of which is enthusiastically embraced by the CADISE Policy Group, and the latter as something to be used as a yardstick against which to look for alternative forms of collaborative management, short of merger. Thus, talking about ‘partnering’ within the context of the range of relational activity can be unsettling when individuals do not know where along a spectrum of relational activity the conversation is located. An international review of studies of economies of scale in higher education conducted by Patterson came to mixed conclusions about the benefits and value of merger:

...supporters, advocates and drivers of higher education mergers and other growth strategies do tend to overestimate and emphasise the benefits but underplay the costs. The findings outlined here at least question several of the most common merger and growth beliefs and assumptions: that small institutions are inefficient; that large institutions are most efficient, that institutions should have a broad range of educational offerings; that amalgamations will lead to cost savings.

(Patterson 2000:259)

This is not a lone view and can be traced along a continuum of literature on the implications of the massification of higher educational systems and institutional mergers (Harman: 1991; Rowley: 1997; Ramsden: 2000; Ramsden and Brown: 2002).

Thus, whilst the case for informal partnership or sub-institutional relations short of merger may arise and grow organically, it would appear that the more formal the relationship intensity, the more that there is a requirement for management, as
opposed to pure facilitation or development. Other requirements for skills of leadership and management may relate to the framework within which collaboration takes place, or the balancing of organisational interests versus those of interested parties. In the context of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project, the table below was produced for the accompanying book as a basis on which to understand the nature of collaborative models that exist in higher education, together with the recognition that colleges and universities may be involved simultaneously in several different forms of collaboration.

**TABLE 8 – SPECTRUM OF RELATIONAL ACTIVITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership / Sub- Institutional Arrangements</th>
<th>Strategic Alliances / International Alliances</th>
<th>Confederal / Federal Solutions</th>
<th>UK Mergers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informally on a non-exclusive basis</td>
<td>Independent institutions working formally together on various activities e.g. CADISE, Universitas 21, Worldwide Universities Network, Synergy (Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities) Regional and Cross Regional Consortia, e.g. White Rose Consortium, Universities 4 the North East. Interestingly, some of these have appointed CEOs/Executive Directors</td>
<td>Independent institutions using some central federal support, sharing some activities and giving federal degrees e.g. University of London, University of Wales, National University of Ireland. Semi-autonomous bodies within a federal structure, but with some powers and legal identity e.g. University of Natal Non autonomous bodies within one institution but with some local managerial powers e.g. Cranfield campuses Variations on above e.g. <em>Academic Federation between University of Surrey /Roehampton where both retained legal/operational autonomy save in respect of certain academic responsibilities delegated to a Federal Senate set under Surrey’s Charter and Statutes.</em> (since de-federalised from 2004 and subsequent separate University status achieved)</td>
<td>Fully merged unitary institutions with several campuses run by one central administration e.g. West London Institute of HE with Brunel University (94/95) Winchester College of Art with Southampton University (96/97); Loughborough College of Art &amp; Design with Loughborough University (98/99); Bretton Hall College with University of Leeds (01/02); Merger of University of North London with London Guildhall University (2002)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the examples set out in the table above there are a number of characteristics that can be applied to further designations of collaborative associations. These include contract, validation models and franchise-type agreements, joint programmes and dual-sector models. The drivers for such associations and collaborative activity with regard to scale, geography, discipline allegiance or institutional type, are often addressed in literatures and will form the basis of further discussion on process literature in Chapter 7.
SUMMARY OF CHAPTER AND CONCLUSION

This chapter has introduced the approach for managing the wide body of literature that has been reviewed in order to help explore, examine and explain the principal and subsidiary questions in this research. As collaborative management is an emergent area the literature is fragmented with no one identifiable body of literature that can readily be turned to. Therefore the net has been cast widely both in terms of drawing on literature from a number of disciplinary fields and looking nationally and internationally at a range of literatures and considering literature at a range of levels, including a body of what is known as ‘grey’ literature. It is recognised that during the course of this research there has been an increasing interest in the area of collaborative management as something novel and different and so academic writing on allied areas has been tracked. At the same time literatures from business, management, sociology, psychology and education fields on component parts of collaborative management have been scoped. At the inception of this research in 2000 there were limitations on what had been written, a definite sparsity in relation to empirical studies and process literature relating to strategic alliances was very piecemeal.

Preliminary considerations in this and the succeeding literature chapters relate to the three dimensions of policy, people and process that provide the framework and form a consistent thread throughout this research. Without such a framework the management of the literature could have become unwieldy. The three parallel dimensions have worked well in order to deconstruct some of the components and factors of collaborative management. Thus considerations of collaborative management and the possibilities and parameters of partnership have drawn upon literatures relating to the external higher education policy context from a global, UK higher education and small higher education institutional perspective, evaluating how they have impacted on the CADISE members; the people context centring on the leaders who sit at the heart of the collaborative management case study, their mental maps, the evolving group processes and dynamics of their relationships; and finally the processes that support effective collaboration, drawing on organisational development and strategy formation literature.

It has been the focus of this chapter not just to introduce the 3 ‘P’ policy, people and process contextual framework but to explore the language of collaborative management both to illuminate the focus of the research and to assist the reader.
This chapter highlights various definitions and distinctions that in turn point to some of the inevitable confusion that arises when a new area of academic interest emerges and terminology is used in a loose and imprecise way. Thus finer points of distinction when relational forms are referred to as ‘collaborations’, ‘partnerships’, ‘consortia’, ‘networks’ alliances’ are considered prior to determining how collaborative management is defined in this case study research. The UK spectrum of forms of relational activity can be analysed along a continuum of partnership arrangements through to UK Mergers and while an institution may reside at any point on the continuum, it does not necessarily suggest that there has to be movement in either direction. A typology of current relational activity is set out, and having set out the preliminary considerations the stage is set to proceed to three discrete chapters, each with a focus on policy, people and process literatures.
1.0 COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT IN THE HE POLICY CONTEXT

...one of my contentions is that institutional collaboration and its management (meaning mutual planning and delivery) is a much messier and more contingent experience than any of the models suggest. It is often fragile and irrational. It's also increasingly important to the health of both individual HEIs and the sector as a whole, which is why we mustn't give up in the face of messiness, contingency, fragility or irrationality.

(Watson, 2002b: 35)

Literatures relating to the policy backdrop in which collaborative management in higher education operates are extensive and continue to grow. They are important to this research because they convey the volume of stakeholder interest, the magnitude of potential impact and the pace of change, ambiguity and uncertainty for the small specialist institutional higher education sector within which this study is located. More specifically, academic writing contextualises the meaning of CEO’s roles and actions and the institutional requirement to deal with various changes in the higher education together with managing their organisations.

The literatures includes official papers and reports that provide the new political, financial and educational landscape in which partnerships and collaborations have emerged and are beginning to flourish as well as the many forms of publication which indirectly influence such relational activity. These include books and journals, published conference papers, as well as articles in the educational and periodical press. They all play their part in developing the context of transformatory discourses and shaping the policy environment. Numerous papers were in circulation at the time of CADISE's formation looking at hierarchical groupings, sector typologies, regional and global networks and federation. Some came from the US and the Far East as international conferences on the matter gathered momentum and closer to home seminal papers emerged on diversity, the challenge of globalism and the need for improved articulation of the range of institutions in the UK (Newby, 1999; Watson, 1998; Dowling, 1998; Brown, 1999)

The approach to this section is to examine certain literatures that contain arguments for collaborative management in discrete contexts: the global, the UK and the specialist higher education institutional context, and to suggest some pointers as to
the potential impact of each. Above all, however, is the argument proposed by Shattock (1996) that supports the theme that in the UK the 'core business' of higher education institutions is changing. Today's emphasis is on markets and on institutions seeking niches within these markets, rather than on the historic logically ordered systems with clearly demarcated layers. As a result of this quest, it has been suggested that higher education systems have become much messier and much fuzzier (Scott: 2005).

2.0 THE GLOBAL HE POLICY CONTEXT AND THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

The starting point for the discussion is the global context of higher education and the growth and role of consortia in national and international contexts as well as the lessons of success and failure that can be extracted from them. In the search for knowledge about models of collaboration the CADISE Policy Group scanned the environment for lessons that could be learnt and implemented to augment the chance of success of the consortium. With the critical mass of seven institutions aligned in terms of commonality and complementarity of subject matter, there was an enhanced opportunity to make contact with other consortia and "punch above weight" in terms of a pioneering collective.¹ Early drafts of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills bid show explicitly the CADISE Policy Group awareness of the global HE policy context, their commitment to securing a future in it and the anticipated shifts in management in order to counter their perceived position and to play an effective role:

The challenge for small specialist colleges in an environment increasingly dominated by regional national and international university strategic alliances, is to develop management models (e.g. Wisconsin Model) which allow them to compete on an equal footing with the large agglomerates (or at least negotiate within them whilst retaining their independence). This contributes to the sustainability of diversity of HE provision which is marked by the UK government as of one of considerable benefit to the UK socially and economically.

(CADISE Stage 1 Bid under HEFCE Invitation 99/54: Section 4)

At the outset of the project and during the first year of CADISE operation there was, therefore, the challenge of creating a space for the consortium, for managing complex markets, for maintaining diversity within the sector and for ensuring that

¹ The CADISE model was disseminated in the US, Europe and the UK: through links with the Association of Consortium Leadership in the US, in discussions with the American Council of Education in Washington; through the Cumulus Group, run out of the University of Helsinki (conferences in various Baltic countries including Russia), at British Design Council events in Berlin, at the OECD, Paris and at various regional and national events in the UK.
there would be a role for arts, design and communication specialist institutions in the emerging regional and international matrix. With the increased critical mass of a subject aligned consortia, the sum of the parts afforded a spectre of CADISE as a robust model and a UK voice on behalf of 'specialism' and 'specialist institutions'.

2.1 ARGUMENTS ABOUT THE IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION

The potential for global capital’s significant impact on societies has only been acknowledged relatively recently. It has become a matter of concern for national governments and international organizations such as the World Bank and the World Economic Forum. Manuel Castells (1998) has pointed out, for example, that completely unregulated actions of multinational corporations operating in the global arena have the capacity to deepen divisions and inequalities and relegate whole societies (and even countries) to extreme poverty and despair. He has said:

*If the new global economy reaches out everywhere in the planet, if all people and all territories are affected by its workings, not every place, or every person is directly included in it. In fact, most people, and most lands are excluded, switched off, either as producers, or consumers, or both. The flexibility of this global economy allows the overall system to link up everything that is valuable according to dominant values and interests while disconnecting everything that is not valuable, or becomes devalued. It is this simultaneous capacity to include and exclude people, territories and activities, that characterizes the new global economy as constituted in the information age.*

(Castells, 1996: 4)

He goes on to argue, however, that this is not some inevitable consequence of the use of advanced technologies of the information age, but that there are choices to be made that will enable human societies to benefit generally from the productive capacities released in this era – a networked society. As a note of caution he warns that the ‘high road’ to informational productivity must itself be the product of interconnectedness, chosen at global level and enacted within the networks upon which productivity is based. For him, the solution is the reintegration of social development and economic growth, requiring:

*massive technological upgrading of countries, firms and households around the world and a dramatic investment in overhauling the educational system everywhere*

(Castells, 1998:9)

International examples used by Castells to illustrate this point, include the national ‘information society programme’ embarked on by the Finnish government in 1994 through which integrated strategies were developed for education, training and research and the ‘Barcelona Model’ whereby in hosting the Olympics, strategies were
developed by Barcelona city and municipal government that put in place transportation and advanced telecommunications systems, the development of the waterfront and a strong policy on urban design to enhance the quality of life. The universities have been drawn into the latter.

Castells advocates that universities and higher education in general have a vitally important role to play in re-engineering of local, regional and national economies for the information age. However, they can only play this role if they move beyond the sphere of their traditional activities into interactive partnerships with government, business and industry.

An International Workshop on Academic Consortia at the David C Lam Institute for East-West Studies in Hong Kong (1998) resulted in the publication of proceedings from discussions of leaders of the international academic community in addressing how as the world 'shrinks', academic consortia have assumed importance as a powerful and effective tool for practice sharing and new knowledge creation. Within the same publication it was noted by Chan (1998), that in Hong Kong universities strike alliances in order to be able to compete in the globalised market and that internationalization is no longer seen as a choice but rather a developmental key to the 21st century world. For Hong Kong the dimension of change of sovereignty from a British colony to a special administrative region of the Peoples' Republic of China from July 1 1997 served as an additional factor. Chan noted:

...massification of higher education in recent decades has led to severe competition, for funds as well as for students and faculty. To compete, universities today have to find a market niche in order to stand out among the crowd. This is especially true for newer universities, which do not have an established reputation and a large resource base. For these universities, banding together will be one of the most efficient means to gain visibility and market share. But older universities increasingly also form strategic alliances in order to maximize their advantageous position.

(Chan, 1988: 8)

At the same conference proceedings Hans van Ginkel in his workshop on Networking Alliances and Consortia of Universities (1998) spoke about his experience in building North-South co-operation between Utrecht University in the Netherlands and other universities in the North as well as the south. It remained his overarching belief that a global perspective is essential to any discussion of the effectiveness of networks, alliances and consortia as instruments for international co-operation. His view was that:
...with a totally interwired planet, one nation’s development is perforce intimately interlinked with many aspects of the broader global society. (Van Ginkel: International Workshop on Academic Consortia Proceedings 1998:36)

Impinging sharply on the international university world are two major and closely inter-connected processes that Van Ginkel sees as a backdrop to collaborative efforts in what he calls the "enormous vortex of change in the information revolution" (1998: 37): the first is the increasing knowledge-intensiveness of society and science and the second, the long-term trend, resulting from the combination of knowledge intensification and technological advance. The latter represents an increase in scale or 'up-scaling' of many familiar entities in society – financial, social and cultural.

The commonly acknowledged belief is that the creation, management and application of knowledge will come to dominate the 21st century. This would suggest an even more vital role for higher education and locates advanced education and training among the world's dynamic industries. The capacity to develop and add value to 'knowledge workers' and to provide 'lifelong learning' opportunities as well as develop 'learning organisations' ostensibly affords a greater competitive advantage for nations and organizations in the 21st century. Van Ginkel refers to his estimation that the world reservoir of knowledge now doubles itself every five years (1998:37) and considers what this means for lifetime learning systems. A paradox is, however, noted by Van Ginkel that this flood of new knowledge widens the pool while continuously outdating existing knowledge. Similarly, the cost of the production of new knowledge sharpens the debate over what is relevant – what is the need for all this knowledge, why and at what pace? Dissemination and proper use of existing knowledge, the application of knowledge available worldwide in specific local and regional conditions, becomes more and more important. It is argued by Van Ginkel that many institutions with great traditions will acquire a more and more hybrid character, while their orientation on transfer and application increases.

The 'up-scaling' from knowledge intensification and technological advance creates larger entities and this requires the scholar to ally himself with such new centres in order to be on the frontier of knowledge. With the amount of new knowledge, new technologies and longer life expectancies come corresponding challenges for educational institutions in respect of futures and 'lifelong learning'. As the growth in scale and globalisation advances, universities and research institutions will increasingly work together on a broader range of activities and a relatively few big centres of excellence in the international world will come to dominate. Van Ginkel's
argument is that in order to maximize effectiveness and co-operation, strategic alliance development and networking is the logical and natural way for educational institutions to proceed.

3.0 THE UK HE POLICY CONTEXT: CHANGING LANDSCAPES, CHANGING PRIORITIES

Some authors have suggested that higher education in the UK has already experienced radical change in the last 40 years, principally focusing on the rapid expansion of the sector. As the landscape of participation in higher education has changed, so too has the landscape of delivery. This in turn has impacted on the nature and significance of management practices that may need to be considered. Peter Scott reminded us in his study of ‘The Meanings of Mass Higher Education’ that three-quarters of UK universities have been created since 1945 (Scott, 1995: 44-49). The map of higher education territories continues to shift and change, both in terms of creating new institutions, and reconstituting existing ones. Watson (2000: 41) notes:

"we should not forget the role of mergers, acquisitions, alliances and status shifts in the development of nearly every institution that is now a member of UUK or SCOP."

According to Ramsden and Brown (2002) in 2001 there were 131 publicly funded higher education institutions, 88 universities (including the 16 constituent schools of the University of London) and 42 higher education colleges in England. However, prior to 1980 there were just 22 universities in the United Kingdom. Additionally, the higher education territory now also extends beyond traditional tertiary phase providers with HEFCE directly funding degree level programmes in 171 further education colleges in 2003/2004.

Although there has been a significant increase in the number of institutions providing higher education between 1980 and 2000 to accommodate the shift to mass higher education, in more recent times (i.e. the last six years) there has been institutional contraction on the part of the sector. For example, in 1999 there were 47 higher education institutions, as compared with 42 colleges in 2001. Some of this contraction has resulted from mergers that have taken place between higher education institutions. The first Ramsden Report on “Patterns of Higher Education” (2000) lists in its appendix twenty four formal mergers either that have taken place or were planned within the system between 1994 and 2001. Current discussions suggest that it would be wrong to overplay the link and assume that mergers and acquisitions are either the inevitable or indeed the only outcome of collaboration and
co-operation. From models of business activity it can be seen that there are plenty of experiences of ‘partial’ or ‘mixed’ alliances whereby corporations agree on the areas in which they will collaborate and those in which they will continue to compete.

In order fully to appreciate the political context within which all UK higher education institutions plan and operate (in both their individual and collaborative contexts) it is important to track policy developments through a succession of landmarks from the Robbins Report in 1963 through to the White Paper 2003 and its subsequent implementation as the Higher Education Act 2004.

3.1 POLICY CONTEXTS: FROM ROBBINS TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT 2004

It would appear that since the 1960s many changes in higher education have been prompted by developments in government policy. Between 1958 and 1961, according to Harvey (2001), seven new universities were established as a means of meeting the call by the Robbins Committee for student numbers in higher education to be tripled by 1980/81. In the mid-1960s there was further change following the adoption of a binary policy in 1965 and the publication of the White Paper ‘A Plan for Polytechnics and Other Colleges’ (1966). This, in turn, paved the way for 34 polytechnic institutions to be created between 1969 and 1991, formed from the amalgamation of existing technical and other colleges. Pratt (1997:3) has noted that in total 76 colleges were amalgamated to form these polytechnics and a further 46 were involved in mergers with polytechnic institutions.

The binary sector that developed was divided into ‘autonomous’ university institutions and colleges of advanced technology on the one hand and the ‘public sector’ colleges of education and technical colleges on the other, many of which combined to form polytechnic institutions. One of the key aims of the polytechnics was to provide vocationally oriented studies in higher education that were equal in status to those accorded more academic studies. The polytechnics thus enjoyed a much greater local focus and their agendas included widening access and participation, achieving greater levels of participation by mature students and those from differing socio-economic and ethnically diverse backgrounds.

The White Paper ‘Higher Education: A New Framework’ (1991) recommended the dissolution of the binary divide in higher education but still considered the continued expansion of the sector as an important goal. It advocated increased competition
among universities, polytechnics and colleges with a view to further efficient expansion. In addition, it indicated that higher education institutions should look to supplement their incomes from private sources and in particular from:

industry and commerce, from benefactors and alumni and from present sources of fee income. Such private income can enhance considerably the independence of individual institutions.

(HMSO 1991:10)

Policy developments in the early 1990s explicitly situated higher education institutions within a market framework, in addition to removing the distinction between universities and polytechnics and reforming admissions and funding mechanisms. Competition for both funding and students became unavoidable activities. In 1997, the report on higher education ‘Higher Education in the Learning Society’ published by the Dearing Committee outlined a plan for the development of higher education for the following 20 years, adding further impetus to change and noting at the same time that the pace of change was so significant that there would be a need to revisit development plans again within five years.

The report firmly situated higher education within the context of a learning society and the ‘knowledge economy’ and set out the challenge for institutions to prepare their students for employment in contexts demanding familiarity with information and communication technology. In what has now often been referred to by Sir Howard Newby as the ‘Dearing compact’ a set of aims and objectives for higher education in the 21st century were laid out including the following:-

• Lifelong learning
• Creation of a learning society
• Regional economic regeneration and development
• Pure research and scholarship across and within disciplines
• Technological innovation
• Social cohesion

Thus the personal benefits to be achieved from participation in higher education were set out (noting that students averaged a return of 11 – 14% return on their investment in the form of higher wages) as well as the benefit of higher education to the economy. The report recommended the expansion of the provision of sub-degree programmes in order to achieve a target for full-time participation in the sector of approximately 45% and the need to widen participation to those from under-represented groups (those with disabilities, certain ethnic minority groups and socio-
economic groups III to V). The existing diversity within the sector was recognised for the contribution it could make to widening access and participation in higher education as follows:

We support the existing diversity between institutions, believing it to be a considerable strength in responding to the diverse needs of students as participation in higher education widens

(NCIHE 1997: point 78)

The Dearing Report also addressed the funding of the sector and recorded that public funding per student had fallen by over 40% since 1978 in real terms requiring institutions to make 'impressive improvements in efficiency' (points 81 and 74). In order to accommodate the anticipated funding issues it was recommended that funding should move away from a block grant system to one that was targeted in a manner that reflected student choice. Those personally benefiting most from higher education (the students), should make a financial contribution to their education.

It was, therefore, the funding recommendations in the Dearing Report that established the framework for higher education institutions to operate in a quasi-market context — one that introduced a greater need for competition amongst institutions and one where it was suggested that greater collaboration between higher education institutions would 'improve effectiveness throughout the sector' (point 81).

In February 2000, in a landmark speech given by the Secretary for Education at the University of Greenwich, David Blunkett called for a rigorous debate on differentiation so that the higher education sector could be able to meet the challenges of globalisation head on. He also announced the creation of a new sub-degree qualification, the Foundation Degree. He referred to the £2553 cut per student in real terms and noted that it would have been a further 6.5% cut had the recommendations from the Dearing Committee Report not been implemented. In his speech, the Secretary of State reaffirmed the government's commitment to partnership and the 'value-added' that can be achieved through them. He emphasised the need for Universities and Colleges to forge alliances and collaborative ventures that:

allow them to share expertise and resources, rather than compete alone in every different area of provision.

(Blunkett: 2000).

The White Paper, 'The Future of Higher Education' (2003) and its subsequent incarnation in legislation as the Higher Education Act 2004 is seen as providing a
framework for the development of the higher education sector for the next decade and builds particularly on many of the concepts outlined in the Dearing Report. Increasing participation to 50% of young people aged 18-30 and achieving equality of access is placed firmly within the context of the national economy. The desired expansion of the sector through foundation degrees reflects the needs of the economy and of the employers/professions concerned.

As in the Dearing Report, existing diversity within the sector is celebrated, recognising both the desirability of different missions and strengths of institutions. The point often quoted subsequently by Sir Howard Newby (1999), Chief Executive of HEFCE, and incorporated as a recommendation in the White Paper is that universities and colleges cannot do everything and must be able to play to their strengths, concentrating their efforts in the areas where they excel. This is particularly so in relation to research and teaching with a recognition that teaching had previously been the 'poor relation [to research] in higher education (2003:15 (1.18)). To overcome this, the White Paper promoted the view that institutions should be allowed to concentrate their efforts on teaching if they so wished, and that institutions without a significant research portfolio should be able to achieve University title and gain taught degree awarding powers.

The White Paper also recommended significant changes in the way the sector should be funded, recognising the need for substantial investment and particularly in relation to its infrastructure needs. However, reiterating the sentiment expressed in an earlier 1991 White Paper, it also stressed alternative methods of funding:

In the long term we see a much greater role for universities establishing endowment funds and using the income from them.

Changes relating to personal contributions from students and the mechanisms for implementation are set out evidencing the need for a more aggressively competitive higher education sector. However, the need for collaboration between institutions, both across the higher education sector and between the further education and higher education sectors are set out, whilst at the same time arguing that:

Mergers can considerably enhance an institution's standing in the academic community and increase its capacity to generate revenue from a number of sources.

(White Paper, 2003: 80 (7.12))

On several occasions the White Paper 2003, refers to the necessity for strong leadership and management in the sector to meet the challenges that will be required for the future development of the sector:
Both mission and collaboration are challenges that will demand outstanding management and leadership in our higher education institutions, we must support the sector in developing the capacity not only to manage these changes, but also to be in the driving seat of future reform.

3.2 REFLECTIONS ON MASS HIGHER EDUCATION

In the US Martin Trow's classic account of the development of mass education in 1973 argued that higher education systems that enrolled up to 15 per cent of the age group were best described as elite systems; systems that enrolled between 15 and 40 per cent of the age group were mass systems, and those that enrolled more than 40 percent were universal systems. At that time English higher education was teetering on the brink of becoming a mass system (Scottish higher education was already there) and most European higher education systems were clearly mass, while the US was the only example of a universal system of higher education. Now, however, the UK may be seen as "knocking on the door" of a universal higher education system, and especially if the Government's 50% participation target by 2010 is met.

Peter Scott has since used the term 'elite-mass' to describe the UK higher education system overall: that is, elite in ethos and culture, while being mass in structure and level of funding. He sees elite characteristics as a high completion rate of degree courses by OECD standards (ranging within UK higher education institutions from c80% at some former polytechnics as renamed universities in 1992, to 97% at Oxford and Cambridge). This efficiency, in terms of low wastage combined with short degree courses (typically 3 years) by OECD norms, relies on acknowledge and impressive productivity within the UK academic profession, given the recent declining unit of resource and the low overall level of funding for HE teaching by OECD norms. Putting it in perspective the wastage rate in the worst-performing institution in the UK would be average for a state university in the United States.

Reflecting on mass higher education some ten years after he published his book on it, Scott (2005) argues that the UK higher education system whilst embracing the mass model has somehow managed to preserve elite characteristics. This rejects a conventional fit with the standard 'elite-to-mass-to-universal' typology, The author highlights the UK contrariness when addressing some of the key issues in UK higher education: e.g. policies on funding, on students and on teaching and research.
In respect of funding Scott notes the paradoxes that the introduction of 'top-up fees' in 2006 will have. Ostensibly this reflects the acknowledgement of a mass higher education system that is not funded predominantly through taxation as a public service and instead emphasises the market. However, the new funding mechanisms could be construed as a backward move with the abandonment of the important 'market' principle of 'users' contributing through paying up-front fees and graduates paying back their fees in a fairly unobtrusive way through income tax when they start earning. While it is suggested that the Treasury will be contributing more than formerly – more than a £1 billion a year into higher education – this will only be gradually recovered and may never actually be recovered in full because of the interest free nature of student loans.

The structure of UK higher education is a key feature of UK higher education system and one highlighted by Scott (2005). He points out the emergent common theme of developing collaborative frameworks where universities can work together. However, again, he notes the important differences in conceptual terms about stratification or other models. For example, he refers to Sir Howard Newby’s admiration, as Chief Executive of the Funding Council for England, for the US state-planned higher education system, i.e. the Wisconsin State system, but expresses his own lack of confidence that such models could be easily transferred to the:

...much messier UK context. There is no – easy – route through Lifelong Learning Networks to the Wisconsin ‘model’. Messy systems, such as we have in Britain, tend to resist regimentation, organisation and articulation – not necessarily a bad thing.

Scott refers to two current policy initiatives one of which is Lifelong Learning Networks, the other, a physics consortium brokered by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council and both of which have the potential to link institutions in novel and flexible ways. Concluding with a call for new models of collaboration and the need to invest more in partnerships, relationships and networks, he adds a final thought that if his thinking is right, the challenges ahead could be more difficult and more exciting than those faced by the builders of mass higher education systems 30 or 40 years ago. The need to manage complexity in the 21st century is far greater. While he challenges the notion and traditional assumption that resistance to differentiation in a mass higher education system is evidence of under-development or nostalgia for elite higher education forms, Scott advocates that 'hard' differentiation (e.g. tiers and classes of institution, market niches and distinctive missions) is bad. In turn, 'soft'
diversity, in terms of more fluid structures, more flexible and adaptable institutional mission and transgressive roles are good.

3.3 DAVID WATSON ON COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT IN THE HE CONTEXT

In his work on 'Managing Strategy', Watson (2000) gives a reflective perspective on the impact of competition, collaboration and complementarity as external environmental factors. Part of his work recognises that the combination of the messages from the Dearing Report, the government and the funding councils together with those from representative bodies result in a set of priorities and messages that individual institutions in the UK, whatever their separate mission priorities, will be unable to ignore in terms of partnerships and collaborations. He cites the contributors to Lockwood and Davies' work on 'Universities: the Management Challenge (1985: 1–23) who list seven challenges for managers in the future. These include the following:-

- The fact of contraction of the sector [recognised as true in 1985, but which Watson notes should have the reciprocal challenge of continued expansion substituted for it].
- The major constraint of the comparative loss of autonomy of the universities, with the University Grants Committee first swallowed into the Universities Funding Council and then the merged territorial funding councils from 1988 onwards.
- The growth of uncertainty – [something that together with change remains a constant.]
- To become more efficient.
- The challenge of the market.
- The creation and maintenance of flexibility.
- To manage all changes required without excessive damage to the morale of their staffs.

(Lockwood and Davies, 1985:19-20)

To these Watson adds another three challenges of his own and that he suggests Lockwood and Davies might wish to include in any future list:

- To understand and respond to local and not just national and international demands.
- To recognise and adapt to the implications of higher education as a global enterprise that has been put at about £9bn to the UK balance of trade.
• To understand those aspects of the national and international reputation of the UK higher education sector where institutions must act firmly, collectively and transparently.

(Watson, 2000:33)

In terms of the speed at which the external environment has changed in respect of competition, collaborative and complementarity agendas, Watson notes the shift in the official rhetoric that occurred in the eighteen year period between 1979 (Conservative Government) and 1997 (arrival of the Labour Government). Prior to May 1997 he saw officially sponsored competition as the way to inspire innovation and efficiency, the same goals that are now seen as a natural consequence of inter-institutional collaboration. The final step of ensuring planned complementarity of mission between institutions (especially on a regional basis) he cautions, in an ominous tone, has yet to come.

In reviewing the history of collaborative ventures in the UK, Watson's view is that it has lacked impact. Drawing upon the example of a large and expensive Management and Administrative Computing [MAC] initiative which ran from 1988 – 1995 at a cost of over £7m, he points to the disappointment at failure to deliver what was expected. Watson refers to the five important lessons about collaboration that were at that time identified by Mason when reviewing the initiative. They are that:

• Collaborative groupings should generally be voluntary with no element of moral compulsion to participate.
• Collaboration tends to work best on a small scale.
• Collaborative groupings work better if they have shared interest and philosophies and geographical proximity is useful.
• Whatever the size of the collaborative grouping it must have clear project management processes and disciplines by which members must agree to be bound.
• Members must accept that they will not be able to obtain all of their user requirements from a collaborative project and will have to undertake in-house adaptation on their own for a considerable proportion of what they need.

(Mason 1998: 13, 16)

Watson reflected both in his book 'Managing Strategy' (2000) and at the CADISE Collaborative Management Conference (2002b) about his time as Vice Chancellor at the University of Brighton and the close relations enjoyed with the neighbouring...
University of Sussex partnership. From this he drew a key lesson that 'collaboration' and 'partnership' proceed best when they are not entered into either to overcome a perceived weakness or to maximize perceived advantage. The mutually desired 'third thing' or shared objective has to be at the heart of successful shared enterprises. He identified three spheres of activity for optimum regional effect:

- where competition is encouraged (ideally with a good range of product differentiation);
- where it is appropriate for joint action; and
- where each institution can allow the other to pursue the development without direct competition.

Watson argues that 'complementarity' is often hard to achieve, cutting against many of the instincts of competitive autonomous institutions and their ambitious managers. His success checklist includes the need for: a good 'fit' of historical patterns of provision; a relatively 'selfless' approach on the part of governing bodies; good chemistry at CEO level; a reasonably restricted, or uniform 'reputation' range (so that not all quality activity is seen in just one partner); good grass roots communication between institutional members; modest strategic goals; the understanding and support of key non-academic partners and at least one high profile project\(^2\) (Watson, 2000: 35).

Speaking at the CADISE Collaborative Management Conference in 2002, Watson updated his critique on the volatility, turbulence and the state of UK higher education since the 1980s. This source of the turbulence included both external and internal factors: the increased financial strain felt by institutions, a documented breakdown in the market mechanisms of 'supply and demand', government pressures to deliver on a universal (and often perceived as) contradictory agenda of both 'excellence' and 'inclusion'; panic over the outcome of the Research Assessment Exercise; a review (that became a consultation) on student support in England and one which encouraged potential applicants to 'wait and see'; a significant down-turn in the numbers of full-fee paying international students as a result of reluctance to trust intercontinental air transport after September 11\(^{th}\) 2001, and renewed rumblings within the Russell Group (apparently with official encouragement) about a break-away from the rest of the sector if the price is right.

\(^2\) His view was that the CADISE ‘Developing Collaborative Management Skills Project’ was one such example of a ‘high-profile’ project.
He argued, that each of these in turn can be compared and contrasted with the positive of a UK system performing strongly across areas of economic growth, efficiency, student satisfaction and employability, democratization and diversity (but noting the exception of the class basis of participation) research quality, ‘service’ to business and the community and international reputation.

Quoting from the American political philosopher, Walter Lippmann (1914) who wrote about having an 'enthusiasm for the possible' Watson’s thesis at the Collaborative Management Conference was that ‘mastery’ in the higher education system probably depends upon collaboration and that without a more serious approach to it (both across and beyond the sector) the prospect of ‘drift’ is inevitable. Watson endorsed the view of Lippmann, referring to his own personal endorsement of the view of the Longer Term Strategy Group of Universities UK, (that he led), that:-

...in the unfolding present, man can be creative if his vision is gathered from the promise of actual things” (Lippmann, 1914: 18)

4.0 THE SMALL HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY CONTEXT

CADISE is set in the context of small higher education specialist institutions (i.e. those with less than 3000 higher education students) and one where the need of survival in terms of adapting to a volatile and changing environment is acute as well as to a constant promotion of the near excellent to excellent categorisation achieved in QAA subject reviews. Crossley (2001) referred to the early 1990s as a period of ‘the monocentric – a view from the edge’ because of the sensation shared within the specialist college communities that the ‘skids were under them’ – a fact not ameliorated by the challenges of exceptional sector growth, the increasing pressures of the higher education bureaucratic machinery, the highly competitive environment and the rapidly dwindling unit of resource.

A useful summary of the contextualizing factors facing small higher education institutions, in particular, has been given in a recent report (2003) of the MASHEIN group (The Management of Small Higher Education Institutions Network). The report presents the finding of another HEFCE-funded Good Management Practice project, funded under the same initiative as the CADISE Developing Collaborative Management Skills project, and considers the position of small higher education institutions (HEIs) within the higher education sector, assessing their contribution to the sector and outlining the importance of their continued presence.
This report also examines the major general changes explored by Watson and others and addressed in previous section. The five-fold rise in the number of students from approximately 400,000 full-time and part-time students in higher education in the 1960s to over 2,000,000 by the year 2000 has impacted on small institutions who were always facing the critical factor of lack of economies of scale. The MASHEIN report notes that the White Paper ‘The Future of Higher Education’ (2003) and its implications for the future shape and nature of higher education, may be keenly felt in particular ways by the small institutions’ sub-sector. There are plusses and minuses, but most importantly, the sectoral diversity and wider student choice represented by small higher education institutions are more acutely felt and threatened.

The recurrent theme, addressed in the White Paper, of the advantages of collaboration among institutions in the higher education sector addressed is one that is understood and shared by smaller institutions (in a range of activities from research to favourable purchasing arrangements). However, small institutions are wary of the fact that the distinct purposes for which this activity is engaged are not read as making the case for merger. Benefits of collaboration to larger higher education institutions, for example, might include the advantage of working with a small institution distinguished by the quality of its teaching and the strength of its specialisation. This relationship could not exist in the same way if the larger institution dominated the smaller and distinctive strengths associated with size were to be forfeited in a process of absorption.

The MASHEIN Report seeks to curtail the apparent interpretation and perceived assumption in the White Paper that further mergers in the sector are desirable and automatically beneficial to the sector (2003:8 para 41):

There is still more scope to rationalise resources to improve cost effectiveness. Institutions are increasingly entering into strategic alliances and pooling their facilities. The sector is already starting to view institutional mergers...as a path to success rather than as a response to failure (2003:7,12)

Dame Janet Ritterman (2004) in her keynote address at the CADISE Annual Conference in 2004, contextualised the position of small specialist institutions when “Checking out the English HE landscape”. She noted that the disciplines that maintain specialist institutions are primarily arts and design, theatre, music, education, agriculture and medicine. She spoke about the HEFCE perspective on

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3The title of her keynote presentation.
specialist institutions, how the HE landscape had changed around specialist HEIs and posed the question of how in the future specialist institutions might hold on to the values that they had espoused to date. CADISE partners represent some 28% of specialist institution providers, with 39% made up from 'other arts' institutions, 14% are medical institutions, another 14% are Church Colleges, and 7% categorised as 'other'.

The constituency of 'other arts' institutions include the following eleven institutions:

- Courtauld Institute of Art
- Cumbria Institute of the Arts
- Dartington College of Arts
- Conservatoire for Dance and Drama (Federation - 2 + 3)
- Falmouth College of Arts (now University College, Falmouth)
- London Institute (University of the Arts)
- Norwich School of Art & Design
- Royal College of Art
- Royal Academy of Music
- Royal College of Music
- Royal Northern College of Music

Whilst well over half of specialist institutions are arts, it is also interesting to note that not all of HEFCE's 'specialist institutions' are small. For example in 2004/05 the HEFCE grant for the London Institute was £47.5m compared to £24m for the London School of Economics. However, if you take a table of the smallest higher education institutions to which HEFCE grants are awarded, the ten smallest are specialist institutions.

Within the context of the 26 mergers that have taken place between 1994 and 2004 in the HE sector, the mergers have mainly involved medical schools, art and design colleges and teacher training institutions. This reflects the continuing trends of partner institutions 'up-scaling', for example London Guildhall and the University of North London merging to form the London Metropolitan University in 2001 and the University of Manchester/UMIST becoming the University of Manchester in 2004.

The potential vulnerability of small institutions can be attributed to a number of factors: including the impact on HEFCE costs or workload (something that Ritterman termed the 'nuisance factor for HEFCE'); the fact that there are more institutions for HEFCE to deal with directly; more complex systems as special arrangements are often needed; the specialist institutions' lack of 'political muscle'; and the lack of a strong profile outside of their specialisms. In addition, she argued that specialist
institutions might be seen as impacting on HEFCE’s ability to achieve its targets and fulfill its commitments. Additionally, there is: a high cost of provision (unit or resource) which requires premia funding that in itself is counter to HEFCE’s principle of ‘equality’; administrative costs can be significant; the levels of student demand for places in the arts suggest that not just specialist institutions are the answer (includes a 44% increase in creative arts and design between 1994/95 and 2000/01); and there is a lack of strong indicators of success (e.g. employment statistics).

Ritterman addressed the counter argument as far as HEFCE is concerned and “what has kept us out of trouble so far” as the high level of student satisfaction, the positive quality assurance reports, few financial disasters, an increasing awareness of the impact of creative industries on the UK economy and international student recruitment. However, the combination of turbulent times, a changing higher education environment with increasing student expectations, a policy context which is no longer ‘benign neglect’ of higher education, a more interventionist government, demand for evidence of a positive impact on the UK economy and a wider view of ‘stakeholders’ all suggest that just engaging with ‘more of the same’ is not going to be enough for specialist institutions in the 21st century.

In summary, therefore, the challenge for specialist institutions is to find what is possible to help maintain autonomy and independence. In Ritterman’s view, this includes taking account of policy shifts, government priorities and finding innovative ways of ‘doing’. What matters are the ‘ways’ undertaken to respond to changing agendas. The realities of financial constraints (e.g. rising employment costs, a new human resources framework, job evaluation and pensions, dependence on limited funding streams, limited scope for internal subsidy and the need for top quality administrative services), the potential for introversion and isolation within the specialist context, together with the fact that from a monotechnic base, it is potentially harder to learn from developments in other disciplines suggest that there is a significant challenge to avoid being the weaker part of the sector. There may be fewer obvious incentives to explore interdisciplinary activities and in the specialist setting the responsibilities fall on fewer shoulders.

It would appear, therefore, that for the small specialist institution the need to maintain or build support and to be cost effective and financially stable and to be seen to be so, are more important requirements than for larger universities and higher education institutions. This corresponding need to be better than most at doing key tasks, leads
to a heightened sense of awareness about what is going on and a sense of needing to be seen to play a strong role in the tasks of the sector. As the mission of being specialist equates with excellence in the field, it is a ‘sine qua non’ that institutions should be strong on student experience, good at producing evidence of impact and able to maintain a strong name with strong ‘brands’ responding well to political challenges.

Within the specialist setting, Ritterman sees the strengths as the depth of the subject coverage, together with the range of expertise, evidenced with colleagues who are engaged in similar interests and who produce a sense of community through often being ‘practice-tutors’, that is, engaged in their creative and professional practice at the same time as teaching about it. It is against this backdrop that Ritterman sees the potential of the future for working collaboratively and in this sense there is no need to think small. Her challenge thrown out is:

*Do our disciplines need to be taught in small specialist institutions to thrive? If you offered other disciplines a chance to become a monotechnic, would they say “yes please”*

5.0 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER AND CONCLUSION

This chapter has considered a range of literature related to the global, UK and small higher education policy context and has explored some of the current concerns in each sphere that assist an understanding of the context of the formation and operation of CADISE and the impact upon the partners of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. The literature also operates at different levels - through a hierarchy ranging from commentary on the global policy context and knowledge transfer in the ‘information society’, an examination of high level policy and legislation in the UK and arguments presented by commentators such as David Watson and Peter Scott. Finally, two perspectives explaining the policy context as it applies to small higher educations and to specialist institutions, in particular, are explored through examining the MASHEIN report and commenting on Dame Janet Ritterman’s summary of the challenges facing the specialist institutional sector.
CHAPTER 6 - COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT LITERATURE REVIEW (3) - SCOPING AN HE POLICY, PROCESS AND PEOPLE APPROACH: (PEOPLE)

...leadership is not a person or a position. It is a complex moral relationship between people, based on trust, obligation, commitment, emotion and a shared vision of the good

Ciulla, 1998

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A second key dimension in the literature associated with collaborative management, relates to the acts of human agents who found and steer alliance strategies. Such literatures seeks to inform an understanding of the actions, behaviours and mental maps and intents of partner senior executives in formulating and implementing a collaborative strategy against a changing, uncertain and complex higher education environment. The Developing Collaborative Management Skills project was shaped as an integral part of this process of collaborative management - both as a conscious effort to address senior executive professional development and the theoretical underpinning and reflection on the experiential learning required in this area from a CEO strategic perspective.

The ‘people’ dimension (focusing on the CEOs as actors, as architects and charismatic leaders of the CADISE strategy) is thus central to the ‘learning about learning about collaboration’, its management and its practice, as well as the processes necessary to effect a change of structure, systems and processes. This chapter sets the background for understanding questions related to the ‘people’ leading the consortium and the attraction to them of joining CADISE. In particular, it explores:

• what the nature of leaders and leadership in the collaborative context means;
• what are the skills competencies and capacities required for collaborative management;
• how more subtle aspects of managing the emotional context play out;

The chapter also tracks literature on development strategies that may be available, effective and appropriate. However, while literature underpinning the generic aspects of collaborative leadership and collaborative management has been sought out and commented upon, other specific literature on leadership skills, competencies and capacities such as building vision, managing change and communication, and the importance of team/group leadership skills is heavily drawn upon. The importance of
team/group leadership skills came to the forefront when considering 'distributed leadership' and the usefulness or otherwise of literature from the National College of School Leadership. While it was assumed that this burgeoning body of literature could be helpful, when it came down to the essence of what was going on within CADISE, it transpired that the research was not so much about leadership in a distributed setting, but more about how leaders got on working together in a group setting. Their task of melding together different imaginations to form a shared strategic vision for their joint venture was of paramount importance to the success and sustainability of the consortium.

Overall, 'what' literature and on 'what' kinds of leadership, leading to 'what' consequences and under 'what' circumstances has the potential to overwhelm the researcher with endless lists of both the knowledge and the performance skills of an effective leader. There is a vast array of leadership related literature that has relevance to the collaborative management context, but with no one single coherent body that gives confidence that the phenomenon of collaborative management is recognised. Writing in the context of 'Collaborative Leadership and Health' (2002) the Turning Point programme of the Leadership Development National Excellence Collaborative identified three types of research and literature:

- Quasi experimental – usually large, broad studies that point to the importance of leadership in general and collaborative leadership in particular in promoting health outcomes.
- Research examining co-variations.
- Case Studies on relationships between collaborative leadership and health outcomes.

It would seem that practically speaking, many forms of practice in the public sector are facing or about to experience significant change through collaboration. The health sector is one that stands out as an example. Lafasto and Larson (2001: xvii) have noted:

*For the last fifteen years, social scientists and observers of contemporary life have been commenting on a dramatic change in the way we do business in both the public and private sectors. The change that has attracted so much attention and commentary is a significant increase in teamwork and collaborative efforts: people with different views and perspectives coming together, putting aside their narrow self-interests, and discussing issues openly and supportively in an attempt to solve a larger problem or achieve a broader goal.*
2.0 THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP

In reviewing the literature that aligns with the 'people' dimension of this research it is important to briefly track the general literature on leadership. This is significant and broad. Contextualising it is difficult because it has been the subject of so many thousands of books, papers and other publications over the last century, with new works continuing to emerge at an astounding rate. In the introduction to his work "Writers on Leadership" (2001), Van Maurik refers to the fact that in 1996 alone, 187 books and articles were published with the word 'leadership' in their title; and this does not include the many manuscripts that were about the subject that did not actually mention the word leadership. The challenge has been to filter and categorise how much of this information applies to leaders in a collaborative context.

Material on leadership to inform this research ranges from highly academic to that composed for audiences in the mass market, drafted along the lines of 'self-help' books. These in turn draw upon a number of disciplines, including management, psychology, sociology, education and politics. It has been argued, however, that nothing new has really been written on the subject of leadership for over 2000 years. Lao-Tzu, the Chinese philosopher and founder of Taoism, famously stated in the 6th century BC:

When the deed is done, the mission accomplished, of the best leaders the people will say "We have done it ourselves"

There are similarities between this and Mintzberg's (1999) more recent call for an inclusive model of leadership based on quieter and less dramatic leadership. He concluded:

...indeed the best managing of all may well be silent. That way people can say 'We did it ourselves.'

(Mintzberg, 1999).

During the main periods or generations of leadership development, each has added something to the overall debate. Key milestones in thinking and leadership writing over the last 150 years split into four categories, although each is not mutually exclusive or totally time bound. They can be broadly defined as trait theory, behavioural theories, contingency theories, transformational leadership theories. A consideration of these follows below, along with a discussion of more recent models of inclusive leadership.

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2.1 TRAIT THEORY

Alfred Chandler taught that form should follow function and that any organisational structure should be based on the new strategy to be followed. Strategy formation and direction has historically remained the province of ‘great men’ or ‘top teams’ and with the emergence of the capacity to collaborate with a number of partners as a key competence for organisations in the latter part of the 20th and in the 21st century, this requires an examination of the challenge to leadership skills posed by self-organised collaborative entities. Kanter (1994: 96 -108) as one of the first people to spot the partnering and alliance trend, proposed that the ‘art of collaborative advantage’ is key to business success in a new, interconnected world. In order to achieve collaborative advantage, however, it would appear that the outcome is one that must be planned for and worked at and that the ‘fruits of partnering are generally gathered over the long term’ (Pedler, Burgoyne and Burdell, 2004:196). The evolution over time of the ways of thinking about and responding to differences in collaborative arrangements has been suggested as a three staged model moving from:

- Separation and Isolation (they’re different from us and we don’t really want to know about or have anything to do with them)
- Curious and Exploratory (they’re different from us and that’s very interesting)
- Joint Enquiry and Co-creation (we are different and through understanding and using these differences we are working together to generate something new and exciting).

The shift from the “great man theory” where leadership capacities were seen as innate, fixed and cross-contextual to skills and competencies as learned activities has not happened quickly. Vestiges of the “great man theory” are still apparent today with words such as ‘traits’ and ‘native traits’ still in use (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991; Schwarz & Pogge, 2000). They are reinforced by the referencing of the eternal question ‘Are leaders made or born?’ (Kouzes and Posner, 1995; Rifkin, 1996; Avolio, 1999). This earlier understanding of leadership focusing on the leader as a solitary actor with the followers or context having no role in the leadership situation has now been superseded by more recent theories.

2.2 BEHAVIOURAL THEORY

During the post-war industrial renaissance from 1940s – 1960s the move in leadership studies was to an emphasis on behaviour – not only to what the leader
actually did, but the importance of the leader's effect on other's behaviour (Bryman: 1992). The skill set emphasis was on efficiency, management and control in order to produce. Any discussion of skills and competencies reflected a more modern or behavioural approach in which the leaders held sharply different roles and performances of behaviour than their followers (Hollander and Offermann, 1990). Often these roles were anchored in power or hierarchy.

As the post-modern era settled in the role of leader changed again: the homogenous situation of the past, with its concurrent understanding of 'leadership-followership' as an activity of compliance became shattered. Today's world is marked by chaos more often than not, with rapid technological advancements that have both increased and complicated communication. Complexity and chaos, advancements and disintegration mark the organisational climate in almost every sector and as such, result in a call for changes in leadership skills, competencies and capacities (Denis et al, 1996). The shift is from a view of a leader as sole or unitary actor to a team or community centred view of leadership (Dentico:1999). The social and economic circumstances of most organisations produced a demand for skills and abilities that are as complex as the situation in which they are located. This has moved leadership from a hierarchical model into collaborative models (Kanter: 1989, Chrislip & Larson, 1994). Leadership is no longer viewed as one dimensional and is now a process of development, using a variety of skills and competencies rather than a position or role (Avolio: 1999).

2.3 CONTINGENCY THEORIES / SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Contingency theories take more specific account of the other variables involved in any leadership situation, in particular the task and/or the work group and the position of the leader within that group. In essence, a leader can choose to lead from the front, from the middle or from the rear. The key concept behind contingency theory thinking is that success in leadership whether it is the situation, the people, the organization or other environmental variables, depends on the leader matching his or her style to the demands of the situation. It becomes a matter of making the right choice of attitude and behaviour, and of the leader illustrating judgement and flexibility in so doing.
Fielder (1964, 1967) proposed that there is no single best way to lead; instead the leaders’ style should be selected according to the situation. He distinguished between managers who are task or relationship oriented, noting that task oriented managers focus on the task-in-hand and tend to do better in situations that have good leader-member relationships, structured tasks and either weak or strong position power. They also do well when the task is unstructured but position power is strong or at the other end of the spectrum when the leader member relations are moderate to poor and the task is unstructured.

Hersey and Blanchard (1969, 1977, 1998) had similar ideas but proposed that it is possible for a leader to adapt his/her style to the situation. Interestingly they noted that as the skill and maturity level of followers increased, the leader needed to adapt his/her task relationship style from directing to coaching, supporting and delegating. A similar model was proposed by Tannebaum and Schmidt (1958) who presented a continuum of leadership styles from autocratic to democratic. However, perhaps one of the most influential situational leadership models was that proposed by John Adair (1973), who depicted the need for the effective leader to carry out the function of balancing the need of the task, the team and the individual.

2.4 TRANSFORMATIONAL THEORIES

Here the idea of the leader as an agent of change takes over from earlier schools of thought. The focus of thinking, while not in disagreement with the ideas behind transactional leadership, now pointed to the more sophisticated demands being made on leaders. These demands centred around the high levels of uncertainty experience by leaders, their staff and whole organisations.

James MacGregor Burns first suggested the concept of transforming leadership. To him this meant:

*A relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents...when one or more person engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality* 

(Burns: 1978)

Transformational leadership is thus literally transforming people and organisations — to change their minds and hearts, to enlarge vision, insight and understanding; clarify purposes; make behaviour congruent with beliefs, principles or values and bring
about changes that are permanent, self-perpetuating and build momentum. Transformational leadership theories were built upon by Bass (1985) and Bass and Avolio, (1994). They reinforce the notion of the leader as change agent and call primarily for the development of communication and inter-personal skills.

Although there is a shift in thinking many of the assumptions and implications of transformational leadership are not dissimilar to the earlier trait and behavioural models notion of the individual leader influencing and motivating followers and their ability to transcend organizational and situational constraints.

2.5 RECENT MODELS OF INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP LINKING TO LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

More recent leadership literature relates to inclusive models of leadership. Mintzberg's 'quiet management' is about thoughtfulness that is rooted in experience and includes words such as wisdom, trust, dedication, judgement and commands respect. Other authors such as Greenleaf, (1970) talk of 'servant' 'moral' and 'team' leadership where the leader takes up his/her role out of a desire to achieve communal goals founded upon shared values and beliefs, rather than 'because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions.

The concept of distributed leadership founded on a shared sense of purpose and direction at all levels focuses on the processes of leadership rather than the properties of individual leaders, and for example the National Council of School Leadership (NCSL) has done much work in this area. It has been noted that rather than everyone becoming a leader there should be a recognition of the collective tasks of leadership (Drath:2003), the emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals. Within such a group there will be an openness of the boundaries of leadership:

From a distributed perspective, leadership practice takes shape in the interactions of people and their situation rather than from the actions of an individual leader

(Spillane, 2004)

2.6 COMMENTARY ON THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP

The practice of leadership appears to be taking on more than just applying a set of principles. Similarly, leadership development is also taking on a more experiential dimension (Bolden, 2005). The process of leadership development serves many purposes including the aspiration in the Developing Collaborative Management Skills
project of teambuilding and engendering a sense of shared purpose. In looking at the contemporary context of leadership development together with the changing conceptions of the nature of management and leadership, a trend is appearing towards more flexible, experiential and informal approaches tailored to the requirements of individuals and organisations. The latter chimed with many of the aspirations of CADISE and such an approach was adopted. This reverses many traditional educational priorities and as Bolden (2005) noted quoting Taylor et al (2002) this can require a shift from:

theory to practice, parts to systems, states and roles to processes, knowledge to learning, individual knowledge to partnerships and detached analysis to reflexive understanding

(Bolden, 2005:8)

2.7 REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION MANAGEMENT LITERATURE

In the previous two chapters references have been made to leadership and management in a mass education system in the UK and elsewhere. It was noted there that in scoping the literature to assist an understanding of the policy backdrop of collaborative management, much could be drawn from HE specific literature (i.e. sources concerned with change in the HE context, the management, governance and leadership of universities e.g. Trow, 1973; Scott, 1995; Dowling, 1998; Brown, 1999; Newby, 1999; Watson, 2000; Shattock, 2003) as well as from generic leadership and management writings that have relevance to collaborative relationships in national and international spheres (e.g. Abramson, Bird and Stennett: 1996; Gibbon and Parekh: 2001; de Wit: 1998; Patterson: 2000). A number of authors therefore emerge to share a platform and can be drawn upon as a starting place for contextualising the policy drivers behind collaborative relationships in strategic partnerships.

However, in order to assess the 'people' dimension of collaborative management in more depth – the leaders who found and steer strategic alliances - it is important to review the contribution of the body of higher education management literature on 'leadership' and institutional management. This enables one to see what has been written specifically about and what can be garnered from the experiences of 'leaders' in the institutional setting. In terms of models of leadership, university vice-chancellors have figured only at the margins of the academic literature and heads of other higher education institutions have barely figured at all, (Bargh, Bocock, Scott and Smith, 2000:18). There has only been one major study of leadership in British higher education, (Middlehurst,1993) with much of the remaining literature comprising attempts to apply theories of leadership to universities (Adair, 1981),
empirical studies about the social origins of vice-chancellors (e.g. Collison and Millen, 1969), micro-studies of academic leadership (McNeish, 1997) as well as the general accounts of university management and administration where the particular role of the vice-chancellor is rarely highlighted. Of these the one that most practically informs this research in the context of the emergent collaboration in CADISE is that of teams and groups set out by Adair.

One more recent emerging body of higher education literature that appeared to resonate with the research on collaborative management in strategic partnerships was that of ‘distributed (or collective) leadership’ of academic work in the university setting. This was read intently because while recognising that CADISE was not undertaking ‘distributed leadership’ as such, this was a body of literature with lessons emerging that could have both transferability and applicability to the CADISE case study. A number of writers including Middlehurst (1993), Knight and Trowler (2001), have concluded that leadership in higher education is, or at least should be, widely distributed (Shattock, 2003). The shared backdrop of working in complex systems and environments combine to demonstrate that ‘distributed leadership’ (whereby the leadership process is dispersed across the organisation - within systems and relationships - rather than residing within the traits and capabilities of formally recognised ‘leaders’), is clearly recognisable. Petrov, Bolden and Gosling (2006), however, have noted that while the sector appears to have embraced the concept of a leadership process that is conceived of as ‘dispersed’ across the organisation, what it is that is actually distributed (in terms of power or accountability), the processes by which it is distributed, or whether the concept itself offers substantial benefits for either analysis or policy-making is less clear.

Distributed leadership therefore poses a serious challenge to traditional hierarchical and bureaucratic models. It has been suggested that leadership is a property of the collective rather than the individual with Gronn (2000, 2002) describing it as ‘concertive action’ where the total is significantly more than the sum of its parts. Bennett et al (2003) in reviewing its definitions have suggested that distributed leadership is based on three main premises: that leadership is an ‘emergent’ property of a group or network of interacting individuals; that there is ‘openness’ to the boundaries of leadership (i.e. who has a part to play both within and beyond the organisation); and that varieties of expertise are distributed across the many, not the few. Such leadership is represented as dynamic, relational, inclusive, collaborative
and contextually situated and requires a system-wide perspective transcending organisational levels and boundaries.

Similarities with the work of the Policy Group would be the 'learning together' aspect of leadership and the construction of meaning and knowledge collectively and collaboratively. Harris, (2003) writing in the context of schools has noted:

"It [distributed leadership] involves opportunities to surface and mediate perceptions, values, beliefs, information and assumptions through continuing conversations. It means generating ideas together: seeking to reflect upon and make sense of work in the light of shared beliefs and new information and creating actions that grow out of these new understandings. It implies that leadership is socially constructed and culturally sensitive. It does not imply a leader/follower divide, neither does it point toward the leadership potential of just one person.

(Harris, 2003:14)

However, the context of distributed leadership in a sole institutional setting can clearly be differentiated from the case (as with CADISE) of a group of peers at CEO level operating in a strategic partnership across a number of institutions, and especially as much of distributed leadership research is focused in mature organisations, not an entity that has just been formed. The question is how far the concept of 'distributed leadership' is helpful to understanding the nature of leadership within the collaborative management setting of this research? While the CADISE Policy Group might be aspiring to set in place a method of distributed leadership throughout CADISE, their immediate task remained a number of stages back focusing on how to manage collaboratively at the top, in a new form of engagement.

The traditional arguments that have been applied to leadership and management in higher education, referencing issues of 'collegial' forms of governance and tensions vis a vis managerialism, the known difficulties where a strong loyalty to academic disciplines, networks and professional affiliations supercede that of loyalty to an institution, as well as the view the supremacy of individual autonomy and academic freedom that imply an individual discretion to pursue the quest for knowledge and truth above all else, do not feature in the same way. There are, however, lessons learned that do have applicability to collaborative leadership within CADISE.

The overall context of collective leadership in higher education presents itself as challenging because universities have a multiplicity of goals and activities. Managerial leadership is typically conceived of something that is top-down from the executive group and involves putting in place mechanisms for meeting the goals and
priorities for an organisation. This would continue to be a feature of CADISE although there was equally a commitment to seed from bottom up. The latter is an aspect of collegial leadership traditionally emanating from academic schools and departments and relates to the operational delivery of teaching, research and third-stream activities, as well as strategic leadership within a discipline. Authors writing on leadership and management in higher education have argued that changes occurring in the sector, such as increasing complexity and size, financial accountability, market competition, teaching and research quality regimes demand a greater professionalism in the running of these organisations. Again, Petrov, Bolden and Gosling writing about *Developing Collective Leadership in HE* (2006:25) refer to leadership as an "ambiguous and contested domain" because it does not easily fit the traditional academic value systems or many aspects of the structure and function of universities.

3.0 THE PEOPLE DIMENSION: SKILLS, COMPETENCIES AND CAPACITIES

Within the new leadership role that is posited as adaptable or situational to the changing forces of today’s world (Ross, 1992) there are new definitions and challenges in understanding leadership skills competencies and capacities. These appear formidable because of the self-organising nature of collective ventures, and the attendant challenges to individual and collective leadership skills - if they do not get off to a good start, there is no possibility of building the relationship. Cognitive theorists would suggest that inherent in the notion of skills or competencies are a combination of ‘learning about’ something and the ‘learning to do’ something. Knowledge conjoined with performance based on that knowledge develops skill or capacity. Leadership literature often confuses these two interdependent aspects of skills and competencies, listing skills as knowledge at times and skills as performative actions. Both of these need to be considered in formulating a full understanding of leadership.

A further question is posed, however, about whether there does exist an identifiable set of collaborative management or collaborative leadership skills that can be differentiated from leadership or management capability more widely, or are they just a sub-set of management skills? Can they more usefully be employed in collaborative contexts? It is not always helpful that some managerial and leadership literature use the terms ‘manager’ and ‘leader’ interchangeably when speaking of skills (Perce, 1998; Schwarz & Pogge, 2000). If managerial skills are seen as a
subset of leadership skills and capacities, it may help to clarify any confusion that might arise. Management as "producing predictability and order" through various skills versus leadership as stimulating "change through the motivation and alignment of people with an established direction" (Schwarz and Pogge 2002:466) is another helpful distinction.

The literature that underpins collaborative management requires a balancing on the one hand, of desirable but selfish qualities of self-organisation with the broader concerns of inclusivity, and alignment and accountability on the other (Kanter, 1994; Doz and Hamel, 1998; Goold and Campbell, 2002). It can be seen that there are an identifiable set of skills for leading in strategic partnerships and interest in these is further evidenced by call for training programmes and studies such as that by Scottish Leadership Foundation on collaborative leadership and a discrete programme on Strategic Partnerships by the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education in the United Kingdom. Indeed, it is interesting that the area is one where the call for skills, competencies and capacity in collaborative relations is being practice-led with an academic body of literature following in its wake.

The dynamic and inter-personal leadership relationships involved in collaboration and its management have to be robust enough to engage seamlessly and collectively with multiple and changing stakeholder relationships. These included, in this research context, working with funding councils and regional agendas, institutional and collective CADISE settings, managing relationships, managing the agendas set out as priorities as well as building an infrastructure for the consortium. Individuals within the Policy Group appeared to be working hard at designing and maintaining a strategic intent with a view to defining a collaborative culture so that forward momentum could be maintained as well as reconciling their institutional autonomy in collaborative leadership setting of the consortium (and ceding a little of their traditional autonomy for the greater good).

3.1 LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY FRAMEWORKS

It has been suggested that leadership and its dependent skills and abilities work within the context of organisational roles that can sometimes be ignored when leadership characteristics or competencies are identified, (Wilson, O' Hare and Shipper: 1990). The three elements of: exerting leadership; acceptance of that influence by others; and the resultant change or performance; has been reconfigured
to form competency elements by various researchers at varying times. Three lists of such skills and behaviours can be compared and contrasted from Table 9 below.

**TABLE 9: COMPARING LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY FRAMEWORKS OF SKILLS & BEHAVIOUR**

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<tr>
<td>Informing</td>
<td>Challenging the Process</td>
<td>Transformational Leadership Items and Examples:</td>
<td>Transformation - public sector needs and priorities</td>
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<td>Consulting &amp; Delegating</td>
<td>Challenging the Process</td>
<td>- Charisma: &quot;I am ready to trust him/her to overcome any obstacle'</td>
<td>required leaders to engage in</td>
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<td>Planning &amp; Organising</td>
<td>Inspiring a Shared Vision</td>
<td>- Intellectual Stimulation: &quot;Shows me how to think in new ways'</td>
<td>systems thinking, including</td>
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<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Inspiring a Shared Vision</td>
<td>- Inspirational Leadership: &quot;Provides a vision of what lies ahead</td>
<td>analytical and critical thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarifying Roles &amp; Objectives</td>
<td>Enabling Others to Act</td>
<td>Transformational Leadership Items and Examples:</td>
<td>processes, visioning of</td>
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<td>Monitoring Operations and Environment</td>
<td>Modeling the Way</td>
<td>- Contingent Promises: 'talks about special commendations and promotions for good work</td>
<td>potential futures, strategic</td>
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<td>Motivating</td>
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<td>Recognising &amp; Rewarding</td>
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<td>Networking</td>
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The report of Wright et al (2000) featured in the final column above was formulated by the collaborative entities within the National Public Health Leadership
Development Network (NLN) in the US. This consortium of institutions through reviews of current literature and several existing health leadership competency frameworks sought to develop a comprehensive framework that would provide direction for public health leadership curriculum design and subsequent evaluative processes. It provides a useful model of four competencies being employed in a collaborative context.

It can also be seen in Table 9 that the approaches to identifying and measuring effective leadership skills and competencies result in various categorisations or capacities. It would be a somewhat futile exercise to try and match them all up, but rather they are useful and illustrative of the angles of approach to the multi-faceted contexts of similar entities facing complexity. If greater responsiveness and flexibility in leadership applications are as needed as much of the literature is beginning to suggest (Kanter, 1989; Donelly; Kesbom, 1994), employing a variety of approaches to competencies may be more useful than trying to distil all leadership activity into a set of fixed skills.

3.2 SPECIFIC LEADERSHIP SKILLS, COMPETENCIES AND CAPACITIES

3.2.1 VISION, PURPOSE, INTENT

One of the most common matters written about in leadership competency literature is what Kouzes and Posner have called the capacity to envision the future by mastering the essentials of: ‘imagining the ideal and intuiting the future’ (1995:94). This is vision production, where visionary leadership is seen as future focus. It involves possibility and hopeful thinking that expands the boundaries of past or current thinking and practice. In this chapter there is an emphasis on how the capacity to ‘envision’ vests in the leadership, whereas the next chapter has its focus on ‘process’ literature and discusses further Hamel and Prahalad’s concept of ‘strategic intent’ and how this applies in the collaborative setting to consortium establishment and sustainability.

While some suggest that leaders must provide vision for determining the ‘getting from here to there’ and ‘doing what needs to be done’ (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Guarriello, 1996) rather than something that is not yet known, it is clear that vision involves aligning resources in a direction. Formulating the mission and goal statements is an important step in this. Gilkey (1999:272) has expressed the requirement for leaders to be “focusing on the future, founding the vision on core values, making the vision genuinely creative and aligning efforts in implementing the vision.” This agrees with
other approaches that imply a collective nature about vision building, the creative process required of the leader, the rhetorical skills involved with vision sharing, decision making efforts and implementation of vision (Kotter, 1990; Bridging the leadership, 1992; Wright et al., 2000). In relation to vision formation, Bryman suggests four other leadership related skills: those of: communicating the vision; organisational empowerment of the vision; the ability to align the organisational culture with the vision; and nurturing trust as change is implemented (1992:146-147).

The shifts required to meet the challenges in the public sector of globalisation, financial strain, moving power bases and serious demands on already taut systems all point to the fact that visionary leadership is both required and needed.

3.2.2 CHANGE

The capacity to manage change in the current policy backdrop in higher education has been the subject of commentary in the previous chapter (see, for example Watson (2000)). A leader’s capacity to be proactive, dedicated as well as politically astute through impending and constant change is critical for success in the individual institutional context and equally so, if not more so, in the collaborative one. The capacity to anticipate change and its confluent elements can strengthen positions for the future and collective discourse and analysis of the environment in which institutions operate. This should enhance an organisation’s ability to compete and survive and correspondingly lessen any danger of failure. It is understood that change often creates ambiguous situations as well as clouded goals, structures and lines of authority. One case study (Denis, Langley & Cazale, 1996: 686-690) looking at the process of change in a Canadian hospital summarised five propositions that suggested leadership strategies, understanding and competencies in order to plot a course through a change process:

i) substantive change requires collaboration: more specifically the formation of a tightly knit group of actors that can perform specialised differentiated and complementary roles in moving the organisation in the desired direction;

ii) strategic change is likely to proceed in a cyclical pattern in which periods of substantive change alternate with periods of political realignment;

iii) collective leadership roles are constructed and reconstructed over time through the credibility of enhancing and credibility draining consequences of various organisational issues;
iv) leaders may build influence and momentum for change through symbolic management tactics in which openings in the environment are identified and reinterpreted as strategic opportunities;

v) the tactics associated with the implementation of substantive strategic change tend to undermine the leader’s political positions, threatening the stability of leadership role, constellations and slowing momentum for change.

The constellation of skills required for the above includes, but are not limited to analytical skills, the ability to share leadership roles and problem solving processes, critical thinking, systems understanding, consensus and credibility building, collaborative inquiry, risk calculation and risk taking (Kanter, 1989, Wright et al, 2000; Denis, Langley & Cazale, 1996) Kotter suggests that leadership ‘is about coping with change’ (1990:103) and would require the energising of behaviour to move through inevitable barriers.

3.2.3 COLLABORATION COMPETENCIES

In addressing specific leadership skills, competencies and capacities, the final area for discussion is the requirement for leaders to think and work across boundaries (Kanter, 1989, Liang et al, 1993) Here the capacity for collaboration needs to be fostered and embedded and indeed to shift from vertical or hierarchical relationships of influence to horizontal power sharing. An Audit Commission Report in the UK (1998) suggested that one of the drivers for the emergence of partnership working and hence collaborative management is that problems are both complex in themselves and also cross organisational boundaries so that different organisations can only hope to tackle them adequately by working together.

The challenge appears to be the belief that if you bring people together in constructive ways with good information, they will easily create authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the consortium or other organisation. Here, the leadership practices or competencies underpinning the ability to deliver on the challenge are crucial. In a study of fifty cases of collaborative efforts across many spheres of work “strong leadership of the process” (Chrislip & Larson, 1994:53) was cited as a key to success. The kinds of skills called upon in this process included:
Keeping stakeholders at the table through periods of frustration and scepticism, acknowledging small successes along the way, helping stakeholders negotiate difficult points and enforcing group norms and ground rules.

(Chrislip & Larson, 1994:53)

Three core collaborative competencies worthy of special comment are communication competencies, management competencies and political/legal competencies. (A fourth, that of team/group leadership skills is addressed separately in 3.2.4 below because of the particular central importance of the literature to the CADISE context and the research). Kouzes and Posner (1995) have noted that as the complexities of issues generally increase, so do the requirements for communication. These include the need for diverse communicational skills of an organisation's leaders, from writing to public speaking to group dialogue to interpersonal communication. In the context of public health leadership, a study by Liang et al (1988) identified twelve knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA's) that were identified as crucial. They included the ability to articulate the mission and goals both publicly and privately, presenting and defending a position, effective use of public media, writing, and explaining/presenting budgets or other knowledge related content. With the advent of collaboration, communication of information between professions, the capacity to understand various styles and expectations for communication between professions are all of paramount importance and obstacles to be overcome.

The array of communication competencies in the broader leadership literature include those of making one's intentions and positions clearly known (Guarriello, 1995), consistency in what is being communicated (Beckham, 1998), surfaced, managing and negotiating conflict through communication (Greene, 1998), giving feedback and encouragement (Kouzes and Posner, 1995), through to persuasion (Farrell & Robbins, 1993). In addition, creating meaning and understanding, sense-making, writing and reporting, reflective listening, interpersonal relations and facilitation skills can also be added to make a long list.

The second set of competencies relates to management skills. The distinction between management and leadership is addressed in more detail in section 4.0 below. It is, however, important that in whatever way the distinction between leadership and management is made, management skills are seen as complimentary to leadership capacities (Kotter, 1990, Zaleznik, 1992, Donnelly & Keszbom, 1994).
Finally, the complexities of interorganisational alliances and collaborations, call for competencies based on political understanding (Fawcett et al, 1995). Wright et al (2000) see such competencies as including an understanding of political and legislative processes and operations on the federal, state and local levels in the US. Further definition and focus requires competencies in advocacy, community organising, and marketing, as well of finding, involving and sustaining stakeholders at various levels.

3.2.4 TEAM/GROUP LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Group and team leadership skills and competencies are seen as one of the keys to success of a team (Beck and Yeager, 1996). While there are many other factors that contribute to making a team highly effective (LaFasto and Larson, 1989), leadership is certainly one of the more important factors. What of course, is significant about the CADISE case study is the challenge of a group of autonomous leaders working together, yet alone the challenge of leading a group of leaders. A foundational knowledge about teams is crucial for team leadership. Knowledge about group culture, process dynamics and structures, and change dynamics are important for skills development (Lord & Engle, 1996). Having a capacity to think from a team-based focus for operations as opposed to an individual centred focus is key (Misener et al: 1997, Beck & Yeager:1996). Beck & Yeager further suggest that the capacities of clarifying goals, strategies and role to accomplish goals are important in the team leadership process. It is clear that identifying team oriented structures and creating a vision to work together is fundamental for team effectiveness.

It is particularly helpful to review how individuals use groups for their own particular purposes. Handy (1999:153) has set out four purposes:

i. As a means of satisfying individual social or affiliation needs; to belong to something or to share in something.

ii. As a means of establishing a self-concept. Most people find it easier to define themselves in terms of their relationship to others, as members of a role set with a role in that set.

iii. As a means of gaining help and support to carry out their particular objectives, which may or may not be the same as the organisation's objectives.

iv. As a means of sharing and helping in a common activity or purpose which may be making a product, or carrying out a job, or having fun, or giving help or creating something.

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These purposes may overlap or conflict, and the best outcome is to see that objectives and purposes of the individual, the group and the organisation all coincide. The pride and sense of achievement that comes from being a member of an effective group can lead to satisfaction if the individual values the group and the work that it is doing. Handy (1999) refers to this as the ‘competence motivation’ and determines the group effectiveness through:

- The givens – i.e. the group, the task, the environment.
- The intervening factors – i.e. leadership style, processes and procedures.
- The outcomes – i.e. productivity, membership satisfaction.

Factors such as group size, member characteristics, individual objectives and stages of development are all important to group success and sustainability. The larger the group is, the greater the diversity of talent but also the less chance of an individual participating. As to characteristics, people who are similar in their attitudes, values and beliefs tend to form stable enduring groups – homogeneity tends in general to promote satisfaction, whereas heterogeneous groups tend to exhibit more conflict. It is common sense to assert that if all members of a group have the same objectives, the group will tend to be more effective. However, most people bring hidden agendas to groups – a set of personal objectives which often may have nothing to do with the declared objectives of the group. These may include:

- Protecting the interests of one’s sub-group.
- Impressing superiors or other stakeholders.
- Scoring from an opponent.
- Making a particular alliance.
- Covering up past errors.

In order to achieve the best combined result in a group, members have to take a risk and be able to accept a less than optimum outcome for themselves. This is sometimes summarised as ‘the sum of the whole amounting to more than its constituent parts’. However, in order to achieve this, group members have to give something up in order to achieve the end. This will only occur if participants can agree on a common objective and if they trust each other as well as individuals being given the chance to communicate well about objectives and the chance to prove that trust is justified by putting it to the test in some other instance. The four stage successive model of group development is well known in management literature and comprises:
- Forming – the group is not yet a group but a set of individuals.
- Storming – the conflict stage when the preliminary and often false consensus on purposes, on leadership and other roles, on norms or work and behaviour is challenged and re-established.
- Norming – the group needs to establish more norms and practices.
- Performing – only when the three previous stages have been successfully completed will the group be at full maturity and be able to be fully and sensibly productive.

Inter-group relations within consortium and the higher education environment is particularly significant to this research and particularly how fragile or robust members perceived CADISE to be. The degree to which a group is accepted as important and helpful, and the influence wielded by the group, or the perception of how influential it is are all important factors and ones that affect productivity and morale. The ambassadorial leadership role and group members will have a big influence on this.

The intervening factors of leadership style, its processes and procedures and the task functions are all important. Processes and functions are usually grouped under the following two broad headings of task functions and maintenance functions:

**TABLE 10 : TASK AND MAINTENANCE FUNCTIONS OF GROUPS**

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<tr>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>MAINTENANCE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Initiating</td>
<td>Encouraging</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information seeking</td>
<td>Compromising</td>
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<td>Diagnosing</td>
<td>Peace-keeping</td>
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<td>Opinion-seeking</td>
<td>Clarifying, summarising</td>
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<td>Evaluating</td>
<td>Standard-setting</td>
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<td>Decision-managing</td>
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Groups who attack a problem systematically perform better than groups who 'muddle through' or evolve. The decision-making procedure is of great importance here and Handy (1999) notes that minority decisions and decisions by a null response are usually only negative. However, as experience suggested at the beginning of CADISE, a 'no response' can often be the behaviour that affirms there is no objection to something and paradoxically has to be taken as assent.

It is worth noting that the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project was designed as pivotal in building and cementing relationships within the CADISE Policy Group. In this respect it allowed facilitation – a skill that is frequently cited in team
literature. In the edited work on team facilitation by Frey (1995) competencies in leading group problem solving, decision-making, constructive dialogue, conflict resolution and empowerment strategies all tie communication back into the equation and a loop is formed between team leadership skills, collaboration skills and communications skills that become increasingly blurred.

4.0 MODELS AND DEFINITIONS OF LEADERSHIP: THE LEADERSHIP vs MANAGEMENT DEBATE IN A COLLABORATIVE CONTEXT

Another traditional starting point in considering leadership literature is to look at the points of distinction between 'leadership' and 'management'. As Field Marshall Lord Slim defined it:

*Leadership is of the spirit, compounded of personality and vision; its practice is an art. Management is of the mind, a matter of accurate calculation...its practice is a science. Managers are necessary; leaders are essential.*

(quoted in Van Maurik, 2001:2)

It has been suggested that managers and leaders are two very different types of people, with the former having goals arising out of necessities rather than desires. Leaders, on the other hand adopt personal, active attitudes towards goals. They look for the potential opportunities and rewards that lies around the corner and fire up the creative process with their own energy. Zalenznik (1977) began the trend of contrasting leadership and management by presenting an image (appropriate to the context and backdrop of this research) of the leader as an artist, who uses creativity and intuition to navigate his/her way through chaos, whilst the manager is seen as a problem solver dependent on rationality and control. Since then the leadership literature has been littered with bold statements contrasting the two. For example, Bennis and Nanus (1985:21) suggest managers 'do things right' while leaders 'do the right thing' and Bryman (1986:6) argues that a leader is the catalyst focused on strategy while the manager can be seen more as 'a here and now of operational goal attainment' – an operator/technician.

More recently, Zalenznik (1992) has discussed the role of managers vis a vis leaders in terms of managers acting to limit choices, whereas leaders develop fresh approaches to long-standing problems and open issues to new options. It is their role, in order to be effective, to project their ideas onto images that excite people and only then develop choices that give those images substance. John Kotter (1990) concluded that 'management is about coping with complexity' whilst 'leadership by
contrast is about coping with change' (1990:104). This reflects a shift in emphasis from relatively inflexible, bureaucratic processes, typified as 'management' to the more dynamic and strategic processes classed as 'leadership'. However, collaborative management would suggest that as a new and pioneering mode of operation in the 21st century, both leadership and management are equally necessary for the effective running of an organisation, and it is inevitable that there will be a blurring of them in practice. Kotter suggests:

Leadership is different from management, but not for the reason most people think. Leadership isn’t mystical and mysterious. It has nothing to do with having charisma or other exotic personality traits. It’s not the province of a chosen few. Both are necessary for success in an increasingly complex and volatile business environment

(Kotter, 1990:103)

Despite the popular appeal of a distinction between leadership and management, there is doubt about whether this is effective in practice. While management is denigrated as something rather boring and uninspiring, others (e.g. Rost, 1991; Gosling and Murphy, 2004) have highlighted the need for consistency, predictability and continuity and warned that advocating a 'down with management and up with leadership' ethos is a bad idea. Similarly, Mintzberg (1973, 1975) in identifying ten key roles of what managers do, concluded that whilst leadership was one of them, it was not something separate and distinct from management, but just one dimension of a multifaceted role.

Managers and leaders, therefore are not different people, the skills of both are integral to strategy formation, maintenance and sustainability of collaborative relations and a bipolar representation of them as completely different can be misleading and potentially harmful:

Most of us have become so enamoured of 'leadership' that 'management' has been pushed into the background. Nobody aspires to being a good manager anymore; everybody wants to be a great leader. But the separation of management from leadership is dangerous. Just as management without leadership encourages an uninspired style, which deadens activities, leadership without management encourages a disconnected style, which promotes hubris. And we all know the destructive power of hubris in organisations.

(Gosling and Mintzberg, 2003)
5.0 COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT AND 'WICKED' ISSUES

Returning to the discussion raised earlier in the chapter (page 119) in relation to the collaborative competencies of working across boundaries and the complexity of problems facing organizations in the 21st century requiring a collaborative approach, the embryonic body of literature on 'wicked issues' helps to explain why there is a growing need to embrace collaborative practices. A number of academic writers have written about different kinds of problems requiring different kinds of change and responses and particularly about what are termed as 'wicked' issues (Rittel and Webber, 1973; Watson, 2000; Grint, 1997; 2004). Rittel and Webber, first produced a classification that relates to 'tame' problems (those requiring management skills), 'wicked' problems (those requiring leadership skills) and 'critical' problems (those requiring skills of a commander).

The authors suggest that 'tame' problems can be complex but are ones where there is a unilinear solution to them and that they are problems that management can (and have previously solved). For example, the problem of heart surgery is a 'tame' problem. It is complex, but there is a process for solving it and it therefore has a managerial solution or answer. Similarly, timetabling or moving accommodation is a tame problem. Management's role is to engage the appropriate process to solve the tame problem.

'Wicked' issues or problems, however, are those that emerge and appear intransigent without a simple solution because of their peculiar characteristics. Rittel and Webber (1973:155) have suggested that collaborative and not authoritarian processes are more appropriate for their resolution and in their seminal article on planning theory, suggest:

> the search for scientific bases for confronting problems of social policy is bound to fail, because of the nature of those problems. They are 'wicked' problems, whereas science has developed to deal with 'tame' problems. Policy problems cannot be definitively described. Moreover, in a pluralistic society there is nothing like the indisputable public good; there is no objective definition of equity; policies that respond to social problems cannot be meaningfully correct or false and it makes no sense to talk about 'optimal solutions to social problems' unless severe qualifications are imposed first. Even worse, there are no 'solutions' in the sense of definitive and objective answers.

Wicked issues are those that are novel, they have no stopping rule and hence no definition of success. They may be intransigent problems that have to be 'learnt to be lived with' as well as being embedded in other problems. Often, their 'solution'
generates another ‘problem’. Watson, (2000:81) in the higher education institutional context, for example, points to car-parking, tobacco-smoking and security, and especially personal security, thinking about life style issues such as drugs, noise, psychological pressure as well as issues of ‘policing’ the campus. There are no ‘right or wrong’ solutions to ‘wicked’ problems, but just better or worse developments and these may be further complicated by different stakeholder approaches and understandings. Comprehension of the problem is developed through the construction of the solution and perhaps the most important aspect is that securing the ‘right’ answer is not as important as securing collective consent. Hence ‘wicked’ issues are problems for leadership and not management, and the collaborative setting where they can be tackled adequately and collectively is most appropriate.

The ‘critical’ problem is one that is beyond the tame and the wicked. In contrast to the other two, there is a self-evident crisis where general uncertainty prevails, though not ostensibly by the leader who provides the ‘answer’. On such occasions there is no time for discussion or dissent and the use of coercion is legitimised in the circumstances for the greater public good. Critical problems are thus associated with command and the commander’s role is to take the required decisive action – that is to provide the answer to the problem and not to engage management processes or ask leadership questions. This contrasts with the leadership role in ‘wicked’ issues, which is to ask the appropriate question to address the ‘wicked’ problem and to seek a collective solution.

Gray (1989) writing in the US identified six factors that increased the occurrence of such ‘wicked’ issues and were drivers for a partnership approach and response. These factors include rapid change; blurring of boundaries between government, the public sector, civil society organizations and the private sector; and decreased finance from government sources. The internal rationale for collaborative management relates to the belief that working together rather than alone has benefits that outweigh costs and reliance is often placed on prior records of successful ventures in an area or because working together and creating a ‘critical mass’ will open doors that were previously closed. The external driver is often a central government imperative or incentive.

Watson has suggested (2000:87) that the traditional management approach to resolving apparently insoluble ‘wicked’ issues divide into three categories:
• The 'fire fighting' approach (often coupled with a propensity not to deal with a problem until it has become a crisis).
• The 'strenuous interventionists' who are concerned to be seen to take all such issues seriously (they run straight into the common feature of there not being enough resources to put 'wicked' issues right, resulting in a recycling of problems and the apparent manifestation of management impotence).
• The 'reflective pragmatists' who attempt to apply their and the institution's values calmly and methodically. In this sense, more resources from a greater number of members of a collaborative are useful.

Rittel and Webber as authors of the concept of 'wicked' issues, acknowledge the fact that there are not an exhaustively describable set of solutions, and come close to (as Watson has suggested), endorsing the view of the 'reflective pragmatists'

In such fields of ill-defined problems and hence ill-definable solutions, the set of feasible plans of action relies on realistic judgment, the capacity to appraise 'exotic' ideas and on the amount of trust and credibility between planner and clientele that will lead to the conclusion 'OK let's try that.'

In this context a requirement of 'realistic judgment' underpins the management of 'wicked' issues and this in turn relates to an element of sophisticated emotional intelligence that is needed by sole and collective leaders alike. One good has often to be allowed to trump another in 'wicked' issue scenarios and this may require of collaborative leaders giving up something in order to gain for the greater good.

6.0 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND LEADERSHIP

Emotional intelligence is critical in managing complex human relations (Frost, Dutton, Worline and Wilson, 2000) and it assumes an important place in considering the 'people' dimension within this research. It is a new collective noun for human talents concerning 'character', 'personality' 'soft skills' and 'competence'. In assessing the impact of collective strategic leadership in a collaborative setting, it is therefore important to relate some of the literatures considered above both on leadership and teamwork to individuals' practice of communication, to issues of trust and trustworthiness and set within the literature framework on emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence involves the capacity to perceive emotion, integrate it in thought, to understand it and to manage it (Mayer, 1999). It should follow, therefore, that collaborative leaders who are high in emotional intelligence should be able to reed contexts, stakeholder needs, wants and expectations and play a key and pivotal
part in successful collaborative relations. This is more so than those who do not possess such characteristics. It has been suggested that in this context there may well be a tendency to overemphasise ‘getting along’ (relatedness) at the expense of ‘getting things done’ (task). Both of these components take on a more intense focus in a formal collaborative situation. The solution seems to be a balance where a style of autocratic leadership becomes critical in order to ensure critical tasks are completed on time and to specification.

While emotional intelligence is a popular new construct that has been credited with being effective as a new organisational tool for leaders, it is not without its critics. Research in the area is just beginning to examine the effectiveness of its operation in organisational contexts. The most popular work on emotional intelligence is that of Goleman, (1995) who published his ‘best-seller’ book on the topic and asserted that what matters in terms of work rules, is not our IQ, our training or expertise, ‘but our people skills’. He emphasised the importance of qualities such as honesty, integrity, empathy, trust and valuing diversity, and illustrated how the leader is expected to show true concern for people drawing on individual levels of self-awareness, personal reflection and emotional intelligence. Although emotional intelligence is promoted as a new construct, similar constructs have been circulating for over 80 years. Salovey and Mayer (1990) referred to it as an aspect of social intelligence, a term that had formerly been defined by Thorndike (1920), as “the ability to understand and manage emotions”.

This type of social intelligence was viewed as being a part of a multifaceted construction of intelligence, a view shared by Gardner (1983) some sixty years later. Sternberg (1985) classifies three types of practical intelligence as part of his triarchic theory of:

- analytic intelligence (assessing one’s logical and mathematical ability);
- creative intelligence (measuring one’s ability to cope with new tasks; and
- practical intelligence (assessing one’s ability to adapt to their environment).

The two types of socially-based intelligence that most consider instrumental to emotional intelligence are, however, interpersonal intelligence involving the ability to understand other people and intrapersonal intelligence which involves the ability to understand one’s self. Early research, however, has not been successful in defining nor measuring social intelligence (Cronback, 1960, Riggio, Messamer &
Throckmorton, 1991) nor has there been consensus as to the definition of what constitutes emotional intelligence.

The two competing models of emotional intelligence in academic modelling of emotional intelligence are the ‘ability based’ model which is endorsed by Mayer and his colleagues (Mayer, DiPaolo & Savoley, 1990; Mayer and Salovey, 1997) and the trait-based or ‘mixed’ model, which is endorsed by researchers such as Goleman (1995, 1998) and Bar-On (1997). Salovey and Mayer (1990) in the context of the ability-based model defined emotional intelligence as:

The ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions.

(1990:189)

Three components were identified here: an ability to appraise others’ emotions, an ability to regulate one’s own emotions and an ability to use emotions to solve problems. The first component draws largely on Ekman’s work on display of emotions (Ekman, 1993; Ekman and Friesen, 1975) who argued that there are a number of basic and unlearned emotions that are universal across all cultures and that are reflected in the same facial expressions. The second element involves research on emotional knowledge and the third aspect expands research that looks at how emotions facilitate expression and communication.

In 1997 Mayer and Salovey expanded on their 1990 definition by creating a four branch model consisting of emotional perception (the ability to perceive emotions in oneself and others, as well as in objects, art and stories); emotional facilitation of thought (the ability to generate, use and feel emotions in order to communicate feelings, or us them in other mental processes) emotional understanding (the ability to understand how emotions combine and progress through relationship transitions and to reason about emotions); and emotional management (the ability to be open to emotions and to moderate them in oneself and others in order to encourage personal understanding and growth. The table below is the Mayer, Salovey and Caruso Emotional Intelligence test and is reproduced here as it informs the research in terms of the operational measures of ability based emotional intelligence currently in use.
### TABLE 11: THE FACTORS, DEFINITION AND SUBSCALES OF THE MSCEIT

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<tr>
<th>FACTOR</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>SUBSCALES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Emotional Perception</td>
<td>• The ability to perceive emotions in oneself and others, as well as in objects, art, stories and the like</td>
<td>• Faces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Landscapes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Designs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Emotional facilitation of</td>
<td>• The ability to generate and use emotion to improve mental processes</td>
<td>• Synesthesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thought</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Facilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Emotional Understanding</td>
<td>• The ability to understand emotional information (i.e. how emotions combine and change) and to reason about these emotional meanings</td>
<td>• Blends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Progressions &amp; Transitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Emotional Management</td>
<td>• The ability to be open to feelings and to change one's own feelings to promote personal understanding and growth</td>
<td>• Emotions in Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Emotion Management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Goleman (1995) and Bar-On (1997) have, however, subsequently claimed that emotional intelligence is composed of non-cognitive related competencies, traits and skills and they include such personal traits as empathy, optimism, adaptability, warmth and motivation. Unlike the ability-based measures, trait (or mixed-model) measures have flourished, although criticised as lacking reliability and validity (Barrette, 2001) and even by Mayer et al (2000) for not measuring emotional intelligence. The most popular published mixed-model measure is the EQ-I (Bar-On 1997), which can be classified into 5 scales of interpersonal skills, adaptability, stress management, and general mood. These factors, their definition and subscales are set out below:

### TABLE 12: BAR-ON’s (1997) EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE MODEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTOR</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>SUBSCALES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal functioning</td>
<td>• The ability to be aware of and understand one’s own emotions, feelings, and ideas</td>
<td>• Emotional self-awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Assertiveness</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Self-regard</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Self-actualisation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal skills</td>
<td>• The ability to be aware of and understand others’ emotions and feelings</td>
<td>• Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Interpersonal relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Social responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>• The ability to be flexible and later one’s feelings with changing situations</td>
<td>• Problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Reality testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Management</td>
<td>• The ability to cope with stress and to control emotions</td>
<td>• Stress tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Impulse control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Mood</td>
<td>• The ability to feel and express positive emotions and remain optimistic</td>
<td>• Happiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Optimism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Goleman has referred to emotional intelligence as ‘managing feelings so that they are expressed appropriately and effectively, enabling people to work together, smoothly toward their common goals. (Goleman 1998:7) He has also asserted that emotional intelligence is not fixed genetically, nor does it develop only in early childhood, but that it seems to be largely learned and it continues to develop through
life, that we learn from our experience and our competence in it can keep growing. It appears to be good news that people get better and better in these capabilities as they grow more adept at handling their own emotions and impulses, at motivating themselves and at honing their empathy and social adroitness.

6.1 THE QUESTION OF TRUST

A first subsidiary theme deeply embedded in the 'people' collaborative literature, is the key question of trust – the need to have confidence or faith in someone else that is based on a probabilistic expectation that they will act in certain ways. These ways, it has been suggested, should conform to a mutually shared interest, rather than self-interest and preclude the expectations needs and desires of those others (Pitsis, Kornberger and Clegg, 2004: 58). Following on from the question of trust, is a second subsidiary theme, the problem of conflict. However, the word 'problem' in itself suggests disharmony, and as has been pointed out by various authorities on alliance behaviour (see for example, Hamel, Doz and Prahalad, 1989, de Rond, 2002) the potential lack (even unimportance) of harmony does not mean disorder. Whereas disharmony might suggest conflict or lack of sympathy, disorder provides a much broader interpretation including not just the potential for conflict but the ubiquitous nature and probably incompatibility of strategy, the lack of alignment of processes inside alliances, their lack of predictability and their idiosyncrasies.

Trust has been given a lot of attention in the management literature as an explanatory factor in collaborative relationships, although less time has been devoted to defining and operationalising its role, particularly in relation to interorganisational collaboration. Nielson has suggested (2004: 239) that the role of trust in collaboration is usually attributed ex post: successful alliances seem to involve trust, unsuccessful alliances do not. However, most practitioners and researchers agree that trust is one of the main concerns for partners in strategic collaborative relationships, and that much of the literature has paid insufficient attention to the multi-dimensional role of trust. It is obviously an important facet and the paradox has been noted that in order to be an effective competitor in the modern business economy a firm needs to be a trusted co-operator in some network.

The streams of literature in relation to strategic alliances has already shown the division into those that examine the underlying conditions favoring alliance formation (motivation and contractual or structural issues, e.g. Contractor and Lorange, 1998) or the investigation of alliance outcomes and secondly, the impact of alliances on the
partners firms (e.g. Doz 1996). Among these and other special organisational studies literature, there are many diverse conceptualization and interpretations of trust in the context of both intra and interorganisational collaboration as well as interpersonal collaboration. Whilst some of the contributions provide an overview and synthesise theories on trust (Kramer and Tryler 1966, Lancde and Bachmann, 1998, Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt and Camerer, 1998) Child (2001:275) has suggested that:

> Despite the value placed on it, trust remains an under theorised, under-researched and therefore poorly understood phenomenon

Trust has often been conceptualized statically as a social control mechanism, based on the interdependence between trustor and trustee and limited attention has been paid to the evolution and cyclical nature of trust in collaborative organisational relationships. Vangen and Huxham, 2003 have provided an exception to this. It would seem that most studies assume an incremental process of trust development as parties repeatedly interact and it is often treated as divorced from the function and context, being studied in a sole directional manner.

6.2 THE PROBLEM OF CONFLICT

The literature relating to role of conflict in top management teams is instrumental to this research. It is inevitable that CEOs making decisions under conditions of uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity will have honest disagreements over the best path for consortia direction and activity. Although there is not as yet much written about such conflict in an alliance setting much can be extracted from extant research in a sole organisational setting and on how top managers and management teams can manage conflict. Eisenhardt, Kahwajy and Bourgeois Ill (1997) go so far as to suggest that the absence of conflict is usually not harmony but evidence of apathy and disengagement. Members who challenge one another’s thinking develop:

> ...a more complete understanding of the choices, create a richer range of options, and ultimately make the kinds of effective decision necessary in today’s competitive environments

(1997:77)

However, the challenge is to encourage members to argue without destroying their ability to work together. Healthy conflict can quickly turn unproductive with comments intended as substantive remarks being interpreted as personal attacks. Anxiety and frustration over difficult choices can evolve into anger directed at colleagues and can stem from the pace of decision-making through to lack of empathy with others perspectives, something that in turn impacts on performance. In
researching the interplay of conflict, politics and speed in strategic decision making by top-managements teams over a ten year period, Eisenhardt, Kahwajy and Bourgeois III have noted how whilst most executives pride themselves on being rational decision makers, they may have difficulty even in acknowledging, let alone managing emotional, irrational dimensions of their behaviour. Where they are able to master such behaviour so that constructive conflict does not degenerate into dysfunctional interpersonal disagreement and where managers argue without destroying their ability to work together, fighting teams are built that engage in substantive debates over issues and make for better decision making.

In the companies studies by Eisenhardt, Kahwajy and Bourgeois III the researchers found that conflict provides executives with a more inclusive range of information, a deeper understanding of the issues and a richer set of possible solutions. They noted that although “Groupthink” may seem counterintuitive those teams engaging in healthy conflict, not only made better decisions, but moved more quickly as well. Where there was little conflict over the issues there was more likelihood of poor decision making. Groups lost their effectiveness and managers became withdrawn and only superficially harmonious.

In one study by the researchers of a dozen top-management teams of technology-based companies, competing in fast changing, competitive global markets where high stake decisions had to be made, the researchers were allowed to question individual teams (comprising between five and nine executives) and to observe their interactions first hand. This gave an insightful window on conflict in top-management teams as they were actually experiencing it and also highlighted the role of emotion in business decision making.

In four of the twelve companies, there was little or no substantive disagreement over major issues and so little or no conflict to be observed. The other eight experienced considerable conflict, with four handling it in a way that avoided interpersonal hostility or discord whereas the other four were less successful often experiencing intense animosity, executive failure to cooperate, lack of communication, fragmentation into cliques, and openly displaying their frustration and anger. The successful teams referred to their colleagues as “smart”, “team players” and “best in the business”, describing their way of team working as “open”, “fun” and “productive”. They debated the issues, but they wasted little time on politicking and posturing, hitting the issues straight on while trying to avoid being political. The less successful four teams
described colleagues by such words as "manipulative", "secretive" burned out" and "political".

Eisnhardt, Kahwajy and Bourgeois III proposed a six tactic model after analysing their observations of the teams with minimal interpersonal conflict, and noted that the principal difference was that they were able to separate substantive issues from those based on personalities. Their disagreement over questions of strategic significance did not affect their ability to get along with one another. The six point model for managing interpersonal conflict where tactics were more often implicit than explicit identified the following about team members. They:-

• worked with more, rather than less information and debated on the basis of facts;
• developed multiple alternatives to enrich the level of debate;
• shared commonly agreed-upon goals;
• injected humour into the decision process;
• maintained a balanced power structure;
• resolved issues without forcing consensus;

7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS FROM CHAPTER

This chapter has reviewed a range of literatures that can be drawn upon to support the 'people' dimension of collaborative management, and highlights the fact that despite the vast array of literature on leadership, there is not yet one significant and coherent body of knowledge that supports collaborative leadership. Rather one has to pull together threads from papers, books and other publications and weave them together to form a frame within which to understand collaborative management.

The literatures reviewed to underpin the research have included theories of leadership to help understand what the nature of being leaders and leadership in the collaborative context means, literature relating to the skills competencies and capacities required of leaders for collaborative management and examples of literature on how leaders' emotional intelligence might help or hinder the more subtle aspects of collaborative management.

For the purposes of clarity, it is important to emphasise that this chapter has focused on the literature that emanates from a disparate range of disciplines and from experience in defined sectors in order to aid an understanding of collaborative
leaders and the skills/competencies required in the teamwork. It has addressed in
the collaborative setting a number of additional questions, including some that are
quite fundamental, such as: what is collaborative leadership, is there a body of
literature that recognises its existence? is there a distinction between it and
collaborative management? does collaborative management suggest a separate set
of skills or is the skillset merely a variation on leadership skills required of every
senior manager in higher education in the 21st century? Writings on emotional
intelligence and the growing awareness of the importance of social relations in the
leadership contract and particularly the emergent thoughts about 'informal;‘
dispersed' leadership and team/group dynamics have also been considered as part
of this discussion.

In the next chapter, considerations of process and the literature to support
collaborative management will be considered. It is important to remind the reader that
there is an inevitable overlap and blurring of the distinctions between processes put
in place by the leaders and the people behaviours that take place within the process.
In Chapter 7 the activity of strategy formation is discussed as a process component
or organisational development aspect of collaborative management. However, the
individual contribution (or lack of it) to the consortium, as part of the role of
collaborative leadership is considered in this chapter as part of the 'people'
dimension. Individual strategic intents reside in the minds of each CEO, whereas
the evolution of their formal/informal intents shared in the collective setting can be
explored as a process. Following through how those individual intents translate and
manifest in the collaborative context in terms of behaviour may relate more to the
emotional intelligence literature and so this is considered in both Chapters 6 and 7.

Whether literature is considered in the 'process' or the 'people' chapter, depends on
whether an organisational behaviour perspective (process), or an individual-centred
stance (people) is taken. Engaging with the literatures that impinge on 'people' is
fundamental, pivotal and central to understanding of both the individual personal and
collective translation of the policy context and practices of collaborative management.
CHAPTER 7 – LITERATURE REVIEW (4)
SCOPING AN HE POLICY, PEOPLE AND PROCESS APPROACH:
(PROCESS)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous literature chapters academic writing and commentary traversing the higher education policy context, together with selective literatures relating to the 'people' and leadership component of collaborative management were addressed as two dimensions of a three part model of 'policy', 'people' and 'process' that underpins and influences its development. Metaphorically speaking, these two areas form part of the 'ingredients' from which the on-going production line of the collaborative management process can be 'baked'. The third area, that of 'process' forms the final dimension. Variations in the quality and quantity of such ingredients at any one time can affect the recipe, and the resultant product may not turn out the same in any two batches of baking. The overall process of collaborative management, (the 'baking' and the 'product') has the capacity to effect a change of structure, and as discussed in the previous chapter, allows engagement in a different way with new and changing relationships to the context and content of the environment in which small specialist higher institutions operate.

The collaborative management process also interfaces with the invisible psycho-social structure where leadership, influence and authority can have potent impact in new relational and inter-institutional settings. Matters such as intent, integrity, transparency and skills like listening and learning, are instrumental to the collaborative management process and equip individuals for a paradoxical coexistence of heightened collaboration with intense competition.

This chapter, therefore, starts with an examination of organisation development and contextual process literature in the context of change. It will proceed to explore the concept of cooperative strategy as faced by the collective leaders, various models of collaborative process and consider in some detail the notion of interorganisational synthesis. The latter identifies ten building blocks, based on five years of empirical research (see Pitsis, Clegg, Rura-Polley and Marosszeky, (2002); Clegg, Pitsis, Rura-Rolley and Marosszeky, (2002)) and can be used both to construct future signposts for crucial areas of concern as well as highlighting areas of potential miscommunication. Inter-organisational synthesis identifies key indicators necessary to construct a shared "culture of..." or at least a shared understanding of the symbolic.
meaning of a particular collaboration. Finally, the chapter will discuss in more detail the twin theoretical constructs from the literature that have particular resonance for this study on CADISE - strategic intent in collaborating to compete and the legitimacy of messiness.

The challenge of this chapter is to delineate those literatures that support processes within the meaning of this research and to distinguish them from the literatures considered under the dimension of ‘people’ in the preceding chapter. Some of the issues were addressed at the conclusion of the previous chapter. Inevitably, the skills and values of individual and collective leadership, and their individual and collective approach to strategy formation as the human agents of “alliance” working have a place in both chapters. Because there is a somewhat artificial separation undertaken for the purposes of managing the literatures used in this study, there is an overlap of themes considered in both Chapters 6 and 7 and arguably some of the matters considered in one section relating to leaders and leadership could, equally for example have been a subject of consideration from a process perspective.

2.0 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONTEXTUAL - PROCESSUAL CHANGE

The theoretical foundations of organisation development can be traced to the work of Lewin (1958) where organisational change is seen as involving a movement from one fixed state to another through various planned stages: ‘unfreezing’, ‘changing’, ‘refreezing’. In the context of this research, CADISE presents a variant on this process because it operates in an interorganisational context rather than in a sole institutional one. It also presents a relatively unique situation, because as noted by Charles Handy (1999):

*not everyone has the opportunity to be involved in the formation of an organisation from scratch*

(Handy, 1999:252)

Three main early schools of thought that contributed to the development of organisation development and became embedded within it, to a lesser or greater extent, are those of the:

- individual perspective,
- group dynamics,
- open systems.
Whereas the individual perspective includes the behaviourists (arguing that in order to change behaviour it is necessary to change the conditions which have caused it) and the Gestalt-Field psychologists (where the interest is not only in actions and responses but the interpretations which people place upon them), the group dynamics school attempts to achieve organisational change through focusing upon teams and work groups. They argue that because everyone in organisations work in one or more groups, there is no point in concentrating upon individuals in isolation, rather the focus should be on trying to change group norms, roles and values. The open system school takes the organisation per se as its primary focus of attention, and is seen as consisting of a number of inter-connected sub-systems where a change to one sub-system, will affect other sub-systems and the overall performance of the system or organisation.

Organisation development has been defined by French and Bell (1995) as:

A long term effort, led and supported by top management, to improve an organisation's visioning, empowerment, learning and problem-solving processes, through an ongoing collaboration management of organisation culture – with special emphasis on the culture of intact work teams and other team configurations – utilizing the consultant-facilitator role and the theory and technology of applied behavioural science, including action research

(French and Bell, 1995:28)

There is no fast solution, therefore, in progressing organisation development and the position would appear to be that the development should be led and supported wherever possible, by Senior Executives. Organisational development involves creating an image of a desired future for the organisation that requires employee 'empowerment' and incorporates the 'learning organisation', one that has been defined by Senge (1990) as:

...one where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together.

(Senge, 1990:3)

The idea within CADISE was to formulate an organisation where individual cultures could co-exist alongside a collective collaborative culture and where the latter was organized in a way that both the institutional and the consortium's needs and objectives were satisfied. The focus, therefore, would be upon a strong group dynamics orientation with team working and team configurations as well as utilising the external consultant-facilitator role made possible through the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. The project would through its work with
the CEOs build upon applied behavioural science (derived from psychology and social psychology) and in French and Bell's view of 'action research' this includes:

The participative model of collaborative and iterative...diagnosis and action taking in that which the leader, organisation members and the organisation development practitioner...work together to define and resolve problems and opportunities.

(French and Bell, 1995:32)

The ambitions of CADISE and its project can also be viewed from the perspective of the shift from organisational development approaches to contextual-processual models. In critiquing this shift and change by higher education management educators, Blackwell and Preece (2001) refer to Preece et al's earlier work (1999) where they note the lack of recognition and ability to theorise the influence of the wider economy and society upon work organizations:

The influence of outer contexts are frequently not addressed in organisation development models or alternately are taken as 'givens'. Even the recognition of inner contexts is commonly restricted to a functionalist view of culture, work groups and systems.

(Preece, Steven & Stevens, 1991: 73)

Blackwell and Preece suggest that what they refer to as the 'truth, trust, love and collaboration' orientation (2001:6) towards people in organisations, includes the ability to account for many changes in recent external and internal institutional contexts such as intensified global competition, the virtual or networked organisation, strategic alliances and franchising. The 'second generation' of organisation development (French and Bell, 1995: 53-56) does not appear to accommodate a recognition of, or attempt to account for, conflict and political behaviour and the ways in which external contextual changes and constraints impinge upon internal organisational processes. The authors suggest a move away from organisational development to other informed analyses of organisation change including contextual-processual frameworks.

Within a contextual-processual framework, organisational change can be seen as emergent, iterative, complex, contested, inherently political, a continuous and discontinuous process of responses to, and initiatives toward changing internal but especially external contexts. These factors are conceptualized as continuously unfolding change, having dramatic characteristics, where there is a role for visionary leadership, internal politicking, quests for power and the pursuit of career advantage. Pettigrew (1985) and others (e.g. Pettigrew and Whipp (1991)) have led on developing an influential model of change concerned with the 'management of
meaning' and one with a strong emphasis on social and organisational processes. This has been referred to as:

"an untidy cocktail of quests for power, competing views, rational calculation and manipulation, combined with subtle processes of additively building up a momentum of support for change and then vigorously implementing it."

(Pettigrew, 1985:xviii)

Pettigrew has further noted in this regard that:

"...the real problem of strategic change is anchoring new concepts of reality, new issues for attention, new ideas for debate and resolution and mobilizing concern, energy and enthusiasm often in an additive and evolutionary fashion to ensure these early illegitimate thoughts gain powerful support and eventually result in contextually appropriate action."

(Pettigrew, 1985: 438)

The literatures above can help contextualise opportunities for this research to contribute to a contextual-processual framework on organisational change. They can also contribute to wider debates about the effectiveness of different approaches to the development of thinking, to strategy and to empirical research and connect with discussion about substantive change, innovative and pioneering structures and ways of learning.

4.0 RATIONALE AND PROCESSES OF COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

The process literature that supports this section references primarily academic work relating to the organisational behaviours and processes that contribute to, (as well as possibly detract from) "the soundness and good working order of the body corporate" (Fayol 1949:81). According to early modern management theorists principles relating to the unity of direction and command were always centrally exercised by top management.

The creation and maintenance of successful inter-institutional collaborations within higher education (as elsewhere) seem to depend on the unity of direction and the processes that connect them, the practices that divide them and the routines that lock them together. These processes include continued references to the values inherent in alliance design and strategy formation, sharp attention to openness and transparency in communication as well as dynamics and performance in decision making.
Although this research is focused on a discrete interorganisational collaboration, there are many kinds of collaborative ventures evident in the 21st century that range from the simple to the complex. In terms of trends in academic co-operation Jacques Tousignant has noted that:

*Never before have university networks been so numerous: never before has it been so technically easy to create them and use them. The telephone, the fax machine, and now e-mail and instantaneous data transmission have revolutionized linkages between network members. It can also be said that never before has it been so necessary for academics to work together in networks. The complexity of the questions asked of researchers, the obligation – in face of financial constraint – to work together in networks rather than alone, allied to the realization that the sum of the parts is often greater than the whole, are all factors which motivate people to establish different types of collaboration and in particular, to create networks.*

(Tousignant, 1996:36)

Whilst studies to date have not always clearly shown what objectives and goals such networks or other relational forms have, or indeed, how successful their operations are, there is a common view that there is a lack of adequate consideration of the ambiguity, uncertainty and non-linear complexity in the environment within which collaborations operate (Pitsis, Komberger and Clegg, 2004: 51).

4.1 EXPLAINING COOPERATIVE STRATEGY

Strategy making is considered to be the apex of managerial activity and is no less so in a collaborative setting. Managers use the word 'strategy' both freely and fondly and various treatises exist about the origins, precepts and effectiveness of schools of thought in this area. Traditional business theory is very clear about where 'strategic management' sits in the scheme of things. J.L. Moore states:

*Whether it is termed general management, business policy, corporate strategy, long-range planning or corporate management, the sector has addressed the same issue: the determination of how an organisation, in its entirely can best be directed in a changing world.*

(Moore, 1992: xi)

According to Watson (2000:1) managing strategy is arguably the most important thing a college or university does. In the institutional context he suggests that a sound well-expressed strategy encapsulates an institution's self-identity, gathers business and wins friends as well as structuring the experience and commitment of all who work for and with the enterprise.

In the collaborative context, theoretical perspectives for cooperative strategy can be broadly assigned to two camps. Economics has served as a foundation discipline for
six such developments: market power theory, transaction cost theory, the resource based view, agency theory, game theory and real option theory and the field of organisation theory and its intellectual parent sociology have bred at least another four including: resource dependence theory, relational contract theory, organisational learning theory and social network theory. It is not proposed to go into great detail on each of these, but it should be noted (and will be illustrated on many occasions in this chapter) that the balance of literature is skewed towards seeing alliances as strategic, financial or economic phenomena, rather than looking at social, contextual and historical characteristics.

One more recent attempt to capture, describe and critique the variants on the strategy process has been undertaken by Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel (1998) who identify ten schools of strategy formation:

TABLE 13: SCHOOLS OF STRATEGY FORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prescriptive Schools</th>
<th>Specific Aspects of Process</th>
<th>A Combinant School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Design School:</td>
<td>Strategy formation as a process of conception</td>
<td>The Configuration School:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Planning School:</td>
<td>Strategy formation as a formal process</td>
<td>Strategy formation as a process of transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Positioning School:</td>
<td>Strategy formation as an analytical process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Entrepreneurial School:</td>
<td>Strategy formation as a visionary process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cognitive School:</td>
<td>Strategy formation as a mental process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning School:</td>
<td>Strategy formation as an emergent process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Power School:</td>
<td>Strategy formation as a process of negotiation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cultural School:</td>
<td>Strategy formation as a collective process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Environmental School:</td>
<td>Strategy formation as a reactive process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst the first three schools are prescriptive in nature, more concerned with how strategies should be formulated than with how they necessarily do form, the next six schools consider specific aspects of the process of strategy formation, and describe how strategies do in fact get made. The final school, it is argued by the authors, combines the others as a configuration, both integrating, and clustering various episodes sequenced over time to describe the life cycles of organisation, but at the same time transforming organisations which may be necessary if they settle into stable states.

At the beginning of this research on collaborative management, the features of a number of the schools inform the research and have resonance in terms of providing a conceptual base for collectively managing a higher education consortium and its work at the beginning of the 21st century. These include aspects of the learning school, the power school, the cultural school and the environmental school.
For the learning school, the world is too complex to allow strategies to be developed all at once as clear plans or visions. Strategies must emerge in small steps, as an organisation adapts, or “learns”. Similar to this, but with a different twist, is the power school, which treats strategy formation as a process of negotiations, whether by conflicting groups within an organisation or by organisations themselves as they confront their external environments. A contrasting and reverse mirror image to the power school, is the cultural school. This considers strategy formation to be rooted in the culture of the organisation with the process viewed as fundamentally collective and cooperative. Finally, for our purposes of analysis, the proponents of the environmental school believe that strategy formation is a reactive process in which the initiative lies not inside the organisation, but with its external context.

4.2 MODELS OF COLLABORATIVE PROCESS – NO ONE ‘BEST’ WAY

What is significant both in terms of looking at theoretical perspectives and at a more practice based evaluation of schools of strategy formation is that there is ‘no one right way’ of viewing models of collaborative process. As de Rond has suggested from his research in pharmacology and biotechnology strategic alliances (2002) one cannot expect simple theoretical recipes because alliances reflect the heterogeneity of the larger contexts in which they exist. It is implausible to suggest a ‘one-best-way’ (de Rond, 2002:22). Below a number of potential models emerging from the models of collaborative process literature are reviewed.

4.2.1 LIFE CYCLE PROCESS MODELS

Within business literature, early process models of dynamics and evolution tend to suggest that there is or should be a linear orientation in alliances. This suggests a generic sequence of predictable life stages, where one progresses naturally from one stage to the next. The table below illustrates a number of models suggesting that alliance life commences with a period of courtship, formalisation of the alliance and with movement toward dissolution or a critical decision that either escalates the collaborative relationship in some way or suggests packing up and going home. This model was employed at the culminating CADISE Collaborative Management Conference at the end of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills Project, where in a 12 stage progression model from (1) "eyeing each other up in the playground" through to (12) "marriage and staying together", the Chair of the CADISE
Policy Group noted\(^1\) that the Conference marked a moment of change from: (5) "having the odd testing break-up and a bit of infidelity" to (6) "maturing into a balanced view of how life could be together". These six stages were all prior to the first formality of 'getting engaged', which was viewed as stage (7) (for further discussions see Chapter 9. on the findings and analysis from the 'T' narrative account).

**TABLE 14: PERCEIVED PROGRESSION IN LIFE CYCLE MODELS**
(adapted from de Rond 2002:24)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D'Aunno and Zuckermann (1987)</th>
<th>Emergence</th>
<th>Transition</th>
<th>Maturity</th>
<th>Critical crossroads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achrol, Scheer and Stern (1990)</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Collectivity</td>
<td>Formalisation</td>
<td>Domain Elaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forrest and Martin (1992)</td>
<td>Courtship</td>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>Operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray and Mahon (1993)</td>
<td>Courtship</td>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>Start-Up</td>
<td>Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanter (1994)</td>
<td>Selection &amp; courtship</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Setting up Housekeeping</td>
<td>Learning to Collaborate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Such relational activities suggested above appear to be both predictive, but more importantly, prescriptive, in that, in most cases, every life cycle is accompanied by a specific managerial task (i.e. courting, negotiating, formalizing, learning to collaborate, ending). Despite their managerial orientation, it is interesting to question the extent to which these frameworks practically help the practicing manager.

**4.2.2 TELEOLOGICAL APPROACHES: ITERATIVE PROCESS MODELS**

Suggestions to overcome the limitations of life-cycle frameworks have included iterative process models. Such teleological approaches to development and change, it has been suggested (de Rond, 2002:24) implicitly assume an Aristotelian

---

\(^1\) Crossley, G (2002) *From Engagement to Marriage – Planning Process and Structure in Collaboration, or 'I wouldn't start from here if I were you'* in Goodwin, G and O'Neil, B, CADISE Collaborative Management Lessons Learnt, pp 60 – 62, Ventura Publications
perspective on process as informed by 'final causes'. Whilst Aristotle did not commit to 'backward causation' he did retain a deep belief in purposes as governing process (Lear, 1988). Tarnas (1991) has suggested that Aristotle maintained that

*the deepest cause for things must be sought not in the beginning of things but in their end – their telos, their purpose and final actuality, that to which they aspire*

(quoted in Tamas, 1991:61)

Two examples of organisational entities in the teleological perspective, illustrating purpose and alertness, while being able to learn and adapt to changing circumstances are those of Ring and Van de Ven (1994) and Doz (1996) set out in Figures 5 and 6 below. Iterative properties are also present in earlier contributions by Shortell and Zajac (1988) and Zajac and Olsen (1993). Sydow and Windeler (1998) suggest, however, that there always remains the possibility of unintended consequences due to either human frailty, misunderstanding or bounded rationality and that therefore the alliance process must at least partly be the product of forces beyond managerial intent and control.

**FIGURE 5: RING AND VAN DE VEN'S MODEL (1994):**

Ring and Van de Ven in examining process in collaborations, conceptualise interorganisational relationships as a recurring sequence of negotiation, commitment and execution, with each phase governed by formal legal and informal socio-psychological process that are focused on attaining efficient and equitable outcomes.
Such processes they believe to be cyclical rather than sequential and suggest that relationships are maintained:

*not because they achieve stability, but because they maintain balance: balance between formal and informal processes*  
(Ring and Van de Ven 1994: 112)

Partners develop joint expectations during the negotiating period. Later agreement is reached and a structure is established on the terms of governance (either formally in a legal agreement or informally understood in a psychological contract) in the commitments stage and finally in the executions stage, these commitments are carried into effect. This cycle repeats itself when misunderstanding, conflicts or changed expectations prompt a process of renegotiation.

Doz (1996) proposed an alternative model with a cycle of sequential interactive processes outlined in the Figure 5 below. He inferred that:

*Successful alliances...evolve through a sequence of learning-reevaluation-readjustment cycles over time, in which the impact of initial conditions quickly faded away. Unsuccessful alliances stumbled on the absence of learning, or on stunted learning, or, still, on successful reevaluation leading to negative readjustments as partners concluded they would not work together successfully*  
(Doz, 1996:24)

**FIGURE 6: DOZ's MODEL OF SEQUENTIAL INTERACTIVE PROCESSES (1996)**

The transitional modelling from linear to iterative still appears to have retained a mechanistic and managerial orientation, characterised by a sequence of recurring phases with fairly precise managerial activities (i.e. formulation, implementation, assessment, learning, re-evaluation, commitment, execution). It suggests, therefore, that 'management' remains as an agent of teleology or the brainchild behind alliance
success. By implication, management is also to blame for the occasional failure because of inadequate consideration about ambiguity, uncertainty and non-linear complexity in the environment within which collaborations operate.

In his research, Doz concluded that alliances do not evolve merely as implementations of an initial design nor do they evolve independently from initial conditions. He noted that middle managers play a critical role in alliance processes and that:

...strategy, content and outcomes are hard to understand without an understanding of how participants in the processes that generate these outcomes interact

(Doz, 1996: 81)

4.2.3 EVOLUTIONARY APPROACHES

A third category of theories examines alliances at population level, and comprises the contributions of Gulati (1993, 1995a, 1995b), Gulati and Gargiulo (1998), Zollo, Reuer, and Singh (2002) and Koza and Lewin (1998). These assume a macro-perspective that focus on multiple, rather than single entities and continuously compete for survival given a scarce resource base and a series of variations. Gulati's (1993) original research on the role of social capital in alliance formation, for instance, approached their creation and evolution as embedded in a wider social network. This has more recently been taken up by Davies (2000) looking at the performance metrics of international strategic alliances and the role played by informal as opposed to formal relationships of managers in alliance success (and failure) and hence performance. He implies that alliance evolution is driven by forces operating predominantly at the population level. Evolution is, in other words, relatively deterministic with the environment as the principal change agent.

Variations in evolutionary theories include Darwinian and Lamarckian evolution as well as S.J. Gould's 'punctuated equilibrium' paradigm. This suggests longer periods of relative stability in alliance evolution that are then interrupted by short periods of change, a state consistent with Gray and Yan (1997) and Gulati's (1998) theorising on alliance evolutions.

4.2.4 DIALECTICAL APPROACHES

The above three generic categories indicate the evolving literature on process models in alliances. De Rond has used Van de Ven and Poole's (1995) review of
process paradigms as an 'intellectual scaffold' (2002: 30) to suggest the evolution of process paradigms. To these he adds a fourth paradigm of dialectics that is based on a contribution by Das and Teng (2000). This suggests that alliance instability and failure can be better understood by examining the internal tensions to which they are subject. Informed by the social philosophies of Marx and Hegel, Das and Teng the authors see alliances as situations in which conflicting forces compete on three fronts:

- cooperation versus competition,
- rigidity versus flexibility,
- short-term versus long-term orientation.

These help explain why alliances are as vulnerable and as unstable as they appear to be. The forces are allowed to compete until one gathers sufficient strength to dominate over the others and then the alliance will evolve into something new, or result in it being terminated. Das and Teng suggest (2000:85) that it is precisely because these tensions are present in collaborations as opposed to single organisations that they are so prone to fail. de Rond believes that this is a better explanation of alliance instability than competing theories such as transaction cost theory, game theory, market power theory and resource based views, although he notes the potential in having internal tensions present, as well as other equally legitimate opposing forces, e.g. vigilance and trust, control and autonomy, planning and emergence, innovation and replication, exploration and exploitation, and justice and mercy.

5.0 RATIONALITY AND INTERORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION

Alliance literature overall remains comparatively rational in orientation focusing principally on discovering potentially varied events that comprise alliance life. Both alliances and collaborations are defined by purposes and their success by the degree to which they meet these purposes. They exist in a relatively deterministic and law-like fashion, permitting generalisation, prediction and prescription. When strategic alliances operate in stable and predictable environments things are unproblematic, but in unstable contexts such as that researched by Doz (1996) on 'high-tech' alliances, the approach suggests that there are affairs unaccounted for. Strategic purposes of alliances are liable to changing circumstances that may be fluid, as well as existing at multiple levels that may not necessarily be congruent with that of the alliance.
A recent body of literature that has been particularly informative for this research relates to a number of papers published in a Special Issue of *M@n@gement* (2004) looking at the practice of collaboration. Grounded in management and addressing the contradiction and tensions between managerial and academic discourse on collaboration as well as difficulties inherent in the global context, the introduction to the Special Issue suggests that collaboration can be better understood by taking a broad perspective. This considers the practice of collaboration as embedded with the tension and the contradiction inherent in competition, bureaucracy, cultural diversity and incomprehension. Such tensions that exist can jeopardize collaborative efforts between, as well as within organisations, although the possibilities for the development of collaboration are identified as an...“interstitial activity that can play with the rules and the system it is embedded with” (Clegg, Kornberger, Pitsis 2004: 38).

### 6.0 INTRODUCING INTERORGANISATIONAL SYNTHESIS

Pitsis, Kornberger and Clegg (2004) as colleagues connected through ICAN, a key research centre of the University of Technology, Sydney write on ‘the Art of Managing Relationships in Interorganisational Collaboration’ and focus their discussion on the notion of interorganisational synthesis. Synthesis comprises the relationships between all organisations involved in a collaborative project. It is viewed as a critical component for members to lever fully the benefits of interorganisational collaboration in complex environments. The authors note that interorganisational collaborations are often viewed as a rational linear process (Cummings and Worley, 1997) and tend to overlook, with a number of exceptions (see for example Huxham and Vangen 2000) the dynamic, complex and problematic details inherent within a relationship. Looking back at management theorist perspectives, such as that of Fayol (1949), it has been suggested that this is not surprising. Fayol’s view was that management develops the vision that tells the organisation where to go, the strategic intent that gives organisation its direction, and although there has been a great deal of development since this “master and commander” view of the world still exists.

The concept of rationality is perhaps epitomised most precisely through a collaborative alliance’s decision making. Here its function represents being perfectly well organized, and being involved in rational and logical processes. This was succinctly outlined by Pitsis, Kornberger and Clegg where they state:
...decision making is Management’s task par excellence – the bureaucratic cogito (the thinking brain) whose decisions the corporate body should follow. Management makes decisions on strategic directions: action plans to implement them and forms of control to evaluate their effect. First the problem is defined. Second, all the relevant information that leads to an optimal solution is collected. Third, reviewing the data, management (perhaps with the help of technocratic “experts”) develops several possible solutions. Fourth evaluating the possible solutions carefully, management makes a decision regarding the optimal solution. Fifth, this solution is implemented in a top-down approach and evaluated constantly by management.

(Pitsis, Kornberger, Clegg, 2004: 52)

This model of managerial decision is, however, being challenged as the dominant force by various new contributions in management and organisation theory. March and Simon (1958) doubted whether decision makers look for optimal solutions, but settled instead for ones that are satisfying - that is, rational solutions within the bounds of their own experience. If, as decision-makers their own experiences increase, then the bounds are less constraining. For this reason they suggest that people have “bounded rationality”. Simon and March see a distinction between the economic view of rationality based on perfect knowledge and that in complex organisations where decision makers often have to work under constraints that make optimal decisions impossible. The imperfect knowledge from which decision makers make such decisions is because there is insufficient time to collect all the data they need, or their information processing capacities are subject to cognitive limitation, so that they are not sure what they need to know and so on. Thus their rationality is “bounded” and they cannot optimise but must “satisfice” – make the best decision that they can – the one that is most satisfactory, based on the information available there and then.

However, knowing from experience that organisational life is less consistent causally linear and unitary than any single theory available, does not sit well with most theories that tend to rely on consensus and alignment of all members to a single vision as a measure of success (Van de Ven 1997:7). Cohen, March and Olsen, (1972) have pushed March and Simon’s critique one step further by suggesting that there is a ‘garbage can’ element to alliance life: a lack of clarity of preferences, which includes vagueness and changeability on the definition and measurement of success and failure, ambiguous technologies and serendipity and a relatively fluid participation, with participants entering and leaving the scene, sometimes unpredictably. Thus decisions are made when solutions, problems, participants and
choices move around and coincide in a random manner and at certain random points.

6.1 THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF INTERORGANISATIONAL SYNTHESIS

Pitsis, Kornberger and Clegg (2004) present ten building blocks that must be accounted for in the design of interorganisational relations if synthesis is to be realized. As a management model for interorganisational synthesis, Figure 6 represents the essential building blocks. Once in place a significant ‘flow-on’ can follow. Whereas power is inherent in the structure in terms of the level of investment/risk each partner commits to the relationship, others vary in centrality and can indicate the amount of influence in decision making and problem solving as well as rights to access rewards and serve out punishment (Hickson, Butler, Cray, Mallory and Wilson, 1986).

The task of identifying and acknowledging the level of power each partner has in the relationship, and the perceived fairness in terms of partner risk and input is critical for interorganisational synthesis: e.g. when the partner with the least inputs holds greater power in the relationship, minority holding power over the majority can result. Similarly, misuse of majority power over the minority makes synthesis non-existent. Pitsis, Kornberger and Clegg suggest that power must always be conceived in terms of knowledge, and as a taken-for-granted veracity of specific knowledge, ranging from various forms (highly classified/framed technical knowledge to looser forms) within which various power plays are made.
Tyrrell (2004: 77), looking from the perspective of constructing a shared culture grouped these 'building blocks' into three main themes of:

- formal structures;
- knowledge (broadly construed) and material resources;
- ideology and emotion.

The ten building blocks are set out below, although not in the order that Pitsis, Kornberger and Clegg suggested, but grouped according to Tyrrell's main themes above. The management guidance is predicated on the fact that uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity are the reasons why interorganisation collaborations exist in the first place and the role of the building blocks is as a model to allow organisations to learn to capitalise on them, and to succeed and innovate.
### Table 15 - Management Guidance for Design and Leadership of Interorganisational Synthesis: The 10 Building Blocks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1: Formal Structures</th>
<th>GOVERNMENTALITY</th>
<th>KEY RESOURCE AREAS</th>
<th>CONTRACT</th>
<th>CENTRALITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Derives from reciprocal constitution of power techniques and knowledge forms as power/knowledge (Foucault 1979)</td>
<td>- These are the core aspects of a project or initiative upon which success will be measured including traditional Key Performance Indicators such as budget and schedule.</td>
<td>- Great effort required in KRA's definition, operationalisation, measurement and analysis.</td>
<td>- Technology availability is also critical because expertise is embedded in systems, things and processes, as well as the ability for all employees irrespective of seniority of role to see that the parent organisation promotes interorganisational level learning</td>
<td>- This is the actor's structural position in a network – measured by contribution to network position through importance, influence, prominence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- It is a form of power where management influences behaviour through empowering individuals within a frame of agreed upon norms held to be rational for shaping action.</td>
<td>- With recent politicisation and openness to public scrutiny there has been a shift toward more sustainable practices.</td>
<td>- Suggestion that KRA design should be a specialist management function, rather than a function of general management (poorly designed KRAs ultimately lead to failure).</td>
<td>- Best alliances have simple contracts, based on mutual understanding, trust and commitment to vision, mission and objectives of the alliance and collaborative culture.</td>
<td>- The extent to which a network revolves around a single actor node: measurement as the share of all centrality possessed by the most central node (N.B. studies with the Aston School: Pugh and Hickson, 1976 and work started and ended by Ahuja and Carley, 1998 in the area of virtual organisations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Where management is not authentic in empowering stakeholders there will be risk of revolt from those who feel they have been hoaxed into a hollow relationship.</td>
<td>- ‘Others’ in interorganisational collaboration are significant because of the degree of synthesis achieved between the otherness of one’s own ways of organisational being and that of others.</td>
<td>- Enforcement comes through governmentality rather than overt surveillance and monitoring.</td>
<td>- ‘Others’ in interorganisational collaboration are significant because of the degree of synthesis achieved between the otherness of one’s own ways of organisational being and that of others.</td>
<td>- This is how learning occurs in collaboration: how information is perceived, processed and stored and retrieved in organisational memory such as routines, practices and forms. It includes:-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘Others’ in interorganisational collaboration are significant because of the degree of synthesis achieved between the otherness of one’s own ways of organisational being and that of others.</td>
<td>- These are critical to what the collaboration is producing allowing experts to adapt/respond to uncertainty because they can use their knowledge and skills to overcome almost any problem. Technology availability is also critical because expertise is embedded in systems, things and material practices.</td>
<td>- These are the core aspects of a project or initiative upon which success will be measured including traditional Key Performance Indicators such as budget and schedule.</td>
<td>- ‘Others’ in interorganisational collaboration are significant because of the degree of synthesis achieved between the otherness of one’s own ways of organisational being and that of others.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Collaborative Cognition**

- **Collaborative Learning** – the mutual organisational and interorganisational level learning occurring within the alliance. Assumes a change occurs in the level of knowledge before and after the learning event. There must be a thirst for new knowledge and a commitment to the mutual growth of all parent organisations. Learning must be fostered, encouraged and supported through knowledge management systems.

- **Collaborative Knowledge Management** – Sterndale-Bennett (2001: 26-27) defines KM as "a conscious decision on the part of an organisation to bring its staff together to help transform well-structured information into an intellectual asset". Collaborative KM involves bringing organisations together to transform learning into intellectual assets by capturing, storing, retrieving and disseminating knowledge that adds value. It requires appropriate information technologies that foster collaborative relations and management systems that promotes and foster the notion of collaborative learning.

- **Knowledge Transfer** – this is integral to both collaborative success and synthesis, both within each parent organisation across the project and secondly when gained at the interorganisational project level, back into the organisation. This requires specifically designed processes for capturing and sharing such knowledge. There must be a commitment to KT, clear procedures, as well as the ability for all employees irrespective of seniority of role to see that the parent organisation promotes interorganisational level learning.

- **Collaborative Memory** – in addition to organisational memory, it is critical that collaborative learning and knowledge is captured and stored in such a way that is easily accessible. Memory in humans is a critical function for survival – what to do and what not to do, who to trust, who not to trust and so on. Memory must then be retrieved and utilised to benefit the current and future collaborative projects. Requires attention and thought as the individual members of the interorganisational collaboration are the senses of the alliance – the people are the eyes, ears, nose, skin and mouth. Information technologies assist, but ultimately it is how humans remember, perceive and interpret this information that is critical.

- **Collaborative Communication** – All the formal and informal communication that occurs in the alliance, including how communication channels and media are structured within and across the alliance and the parent organisation, as well as outside the alliance to the broader community. It comes through the form of all verbal and non-verbal communication and is critical to what Karl Weick (2001) called 'sensemaking'. It is important that synthesis exists in terms of understanding, e.g. mutual understanding of KRAs, of expectations of the relationship, between stakeholders and so on. Careful attention must be paid to what is and what is not communicated, e.g. installation of trust through transparency, openness and honesty can have unintended consequences and implications in complex interorganisational relationships.

- **Theme 2: Knowledge and Material Resources**

This is how learning occurs in collaboration: how information is perceived, processed and stored and retrieved in organisational memory such as routines, practices and forms. It includes:-

- **Collaborative Learning** – the mutual organisational and interorganisational level learning occurring within the alliance. Assumes a change occurs in the level of knowledge before and after the learning event. There must be a thirst for new knowledge and a commitment to the mutual growth of all parent organisations. Learning must be fostered, encouraged and supported through knowledge management systems.

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The most crucial stream in a collaboration, centring on collaboration as a symbol. Two basic questions:
a) What social relations are the base of this collaboration, and b) How shall individuals act within the collaboration
- Integral to synthesis: requires a pre-established agreement about relationship boundary/scope
- Requirement of confidence or faith in someone based on a probabilistic expectation that they will act
in certain ways, that they will conform with a mutually shared interest, rather than be self-interested
and not take account of the expectations, needs and desires of these others. Established through
experience and may determine the choice of the partner or the decision to continue with the
partnership (N.B. importance in relationships involving new entrants as trust is often established
over time, through experience)
- Has a strong affective component and so is bound to expectations (more reason to establish
project expectations early in the relationship and in detail)
- Too much trust can lead to non-questioning of partner/members actions and behaviours, and leads
to acceptance because of implied trust.
- N.B. Necessity of suspicion, especially in first time relationships, or once the psychological trust
contract has been broken (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994: a psychological contract is defined as
‘one’s own belief in the reciprocal nature of the exchange relationship between oneself and a third
party, based on the promises made of implied in their interactions’) Much of Rousseau’s work has
shown that once a psychological contract is broken, re-building the relationship is extremely
difficult.
- Style of leadership is of an effective and synthetic interorganisational culture (cannot be created if
trust is absent even with cleverest legal contracts)
- Durkheim (1933) referred to the non-contractual element of the contract, the non-rational
conditions for rational negotiation and this assumes a dominant role in shaping commercial life. More
contemporary writers have differentiated between trust as a partner’s ability to perform according to
the intentions and expectations of a relation (competence trust) or their intentions not to willingly
(behavioural trust) (see for instance Nooteboom 1995).

This is of critical importance to synthesis (it is what synthesis is all about).
- Not necessarily a question of creating a unitary or coherent culture but one that can accommodate
differences productively.
- Just reconstituting organisational culture into a new arena (like collaborations) adds little value
(Phillips, Hardy and Lawrence (1998)).
- A prime arena for designing a collaborative alliance culture free of the constraints of the existing
culture. (many professional consultancies have sprung up to build an alliance culture for synthesis.
E.g. set up of vision and mission statements, the design of innovative key performance indicators or
key resource areas and enculturation programmes like intensive workshops where stakeholders
employees are trained on KRAs and vision/mission.
- Note the risk in having too strong a culture – a designer culture can take on cult-like properties
where members blindly follow the vision and mission without questioning problems or errors as they
occur (Pitsis et al 2001).
- Advantage of a collaborative culture is that it can be more mechanical than organic in its solidity
(individual organisation cultures, carry deep sedimented baggage of their own traditions and
histories, and are always more organic than mechanical).

Leadership is important for synthesis.
- Requirement of emotional intelligence (EQ) involving the capacity to perceive emotion, integrate it in
thought, to understand it and to manage it (Mayer, 1999) and is seen as critical in managing
complex human relations (Frost, Dutton, Worline and Wilson 2000).
- Interorganisational synthesis comes about through high EQ leadership – a leader able to read the
culture as well as the stakeholder’s needs, wants and expectations which are necessary for
successful collaborative relations.
- Synthesis is best achieved through a leadership team with a representation of leaders high on
emotional intelligence and task structure.
- Requirement for synthesis of getting the socio-technical mix right. The task issues are critical and
some style of autocratic or task related leadership is critical to ensure essential tasks are completed
on time and to specification.
- critical concept of leadership ability to think about contributions through their organisations to the
political, economic, social and technological environment factors. (Dunphy and Pitsis, 2003). Goes
beyond thinking about the bottom line, to a more spiritual approach to leadership.
- Leadership must believe in the principles of the alliancing culture, vision and mission and be able to
integrate those with their social responsibility to all stakeholders, directly and indirectly, involved in
the interorganisational collaboration.

Vision is the grand design of where the collaboration wants to end up at some future point in the and
mission is identified statement of the collaboration’s stated objectives and intentions of how it will get
to where it wants to go.
- Both include an “us-ness” – we, those in the collaboration versus those not in the collaboration.
- Both are critical in the alignment of relationships to collaboration and note:
  1) must be agreement on common vision and mission in order to make the
collaboration feasible,
  2) the collaboration must be aligned to the parent organisations objectives,
  3) the individuals within the collaboration must be aligned to the collaboration’s
objectives.
- Vision and mission must be explicitly stated and driven through the in order to ensure synthesis.
Importance of KRAs design in this respect because vision and mission might be more about rhetoric
than reality
- KPIs should have basic elements of vision and mission embedded and according to the specific,
culture, leadership, vision and mission all suggest a need to understand that social relations are the base of the relational activity and the way individuals act within the collaboration. Both the elements of trust and leadership have been considered as part of the discussion on literatures in Chapter 6 in relation to people, which leaves for consideration at this point, the two further elements of alliance culture and vision and mission. These two elements alongside leadership and trust form a body of literature that is central to this research and additionally allows for a consideration of the concept of 'strategic intent' as central to vision and mission.

7.1 ALLIANCE CULTURE

The concept of culture has been assigned many different general meanings over the years and there are almost as many definitions of culture as there are papers on it. However, the core meaning has remained fairly constant since Taylor (1871) defined it as

...that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society

Alliance culture is of critical importance to synthesis. As a part of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project in this research the cultivation of a collaborative culture from different institutional contexts, whilst collectively seeking to respond to a changing environment from the common base of funding, the regional dimensions and issues of commonality and complementarity of subject as well as grouping in pursuit of key national educational priorities, was a key objective. Each organisation in a collaborative has its own culture, and the view of Phillips, Hardy and Lawrence (1998) that if partnership is predicated on a cultural match of simply reconstituting organisational culture into a new arena, this adds very little value was one that appeared to be shared and understood by the CADISE Policy Group.

Interorganisational collaboration offers a prime opportunity to design an alliance culture free of the constraints of the existing culture (Clegg et al., 2003) and this in part, was part of the mission for the CADISE CEOs. Whilst the CADISE partners were bounded by their 'specialism' and cognate disciplines, the literature seems to suggest that selecting partners on the basis of culture match may not be as important an endeavour as many might think.
Anthropologists use the term ‘culture’ in two main forms: the first concerns the ability of humans to generate symbolic and material interfaces (e.g. artefacts, organisations, belief systems, collaborative leaders) between themselves and their environments. The second refers to the specific, historically situated interface structures of a particular group, a meaning often referred to as “the cultures of [a specific group]” (Tyrrell: 2000).

The idea of culture as an interface has led many anthropologists to explore either side of it. In the ‘external’ ‘objective’ world (as opposed to the social world) there has been a considerable use of natural science models. The ‘human’ side of the interface finds most models have come out of either psychology or biology. These include Laughlin’s work on the neurological basis of consciousness (Laughlin:1974), Fodor’s (1983) work on brain modularity and the concept of an evolved psychology (Cosmides and Tooby:1992). In its simplest form as Cosmides and Tooby (1997:11) have put it (1997:11) “our modern skulls house Stone Age minds”, i.e. thought depends on neurological structures in a brain that has evolved as a result of natural selection over several million years.

One relatively recent model of evolutionary psychology is the relational model of Alan Fiske (1991) that has been used to study business problems. He argues every human interaction is defined by one of five primary relational models (Weber’s ideal type (1947)) and that each are characterised by a form of social debt/obligation calculus.

TABLE 16: FISKE’S RELATIONAL MODEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NULL SET</th>
<th>No relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNAL SHARING</td>
<td>Could be described as “what’s mine is yours and vice versa” Is an ideal described by many communitarian authors “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need” and probably only applicable to close family relationships or certain religious groups. In the business environment its application is limited to situations of natural disasters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHORITY RANKING</td>
<td>Where one person tells another what to do and both expect the lower ranking person to do it. Attendant responsibilities include the right to give orders implying corresponding responsibility to care for those to whom you give orders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQUALITY MATCHING</td>
<td>A ‘tit for tat’ or reciprocal relationship based on delayed pay back or owing of favours (Malinowski, 1922; Goulder, 1960; Mauss; 1990). Unlike the apparently simple form of ‘you scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours’ equality matching relationships can be expanded extensively and in a number of cases become the basis of entire economic systems. When to evoke equality matching is defined by specific cultures as are the lengths to which people are willing to go to achieve a successful resolution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARKET EXCHANGE</td>
<td>The form of exchange upon which capitalism is based (Smith 1981) and exists between people only for the length of time necessary to complete an exchange of goods/services/money. So it can be perfectly acceptable for a market exchange relationship to exist when hiring employees, but a potential employee “buying” a job is considered to be immoral unless it is a franchise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is possible to look at the ten building blocks of interorganisational synthesis outlined earlier as indicators of key areas indicating a shared culture or understanding of the symbolic meaning of a particular collaboration. Recognising that synthesis does not necessarily require harmony (Pitsis, Kornberger, Clegg, 2004) is contrary to the presumption that a strong integrationist and harmonious culture is a sine qua non of effective relational synthesis. Both synthesis and culture here are regarded as nouns describing a state of existence, but Chan (2003) suggested that both culture and synthesis should be thought of as verbs rather than nouns. In this way they account for what has been done in and around an organisation as a way of making sense of what has been experienced. Every person regulates his or her own position within the cultural space created for it and around it.

Because culture is overwhelmingly situational, it will usually be quite fragmentary forming around certain emergent issues and dissolving for the same reasons. Pitsis, Kornberger and Clegg note that often managers will take different sides on these issues, being as divided on some as they are united on others:

What is important is the extent to which these divisions and unity can be constituted within a negotiated cultural order.

(Pitsis, Kornberger, Clegg, 2004: 49)

The fragmentation view of culture shares little with integrationist theories because of its allowance for inconsistencies and contests. It represents contradictory and confusing cultures battling for "the soul of the organisation" (Pitsis et al, 2004:50). Individuals are likely to exist in a state of competing cultural interpretations where they are constantly under competing pressures to identify themselves and their organisation with rival conceptions of what is an appropriate cultural identity. It has been suggested that consensus is transient and issue-specific, producing short-lived affinities among individuals that are quickly replaced by a different pattern of affinities as different issues draw the attention of cultural members. Rather than a clear, sharp image of corporate and individual identity, culture deals in the ambiguity of everyday existence in a world of complex and often only partially shared meaning.

Meyerson (1991) working in the field of social workers noted in his research how ambiguity pervaded the occupation and how practitioners operated in a world where the objectives of social work were unclear, the means to goals were not specified and sometimes it was not even clear when an intervention had been successful, or even what success in this context might have meant (Martin and Frost 1996: 609).
Similarly, Weick (1991) discusses the case of air traffic controllers where normal fragmentation in an organisational culture produced tragic effects when pilots, controllers and cockpit crews struggled to share meaning when an emergency arose, but were unable to cross barriers of status, task organisation and language, resulting in a fatal air crash.

Tyrrell's three themes of formal structures, knowledge and material resources and ideology and emotion, parallel core components of symbols in a ritualised setting, suggested by Turner (1967; 1969). For Turner, symbols and in particular ritual symbols have components of what he calls condensation (meaning the many things and actions that are represented in a single formation), unification of disparate significata (the ability of a symbol to connect, at an emotional/reactional level with a particular emotional reaction) and polarisation of meaning referring to two poles, one the ideological pole and the other a sensory pole. At the sensory pole are those significant factors that may be expected to arouse desires and feelings whereas at the ideological pole one finds an arrangement of norms and values that guide and control persons as members of social groups and categories. The property of polarisation is crucial for an understanding of how cultures, as a symbolic interface act to guide and channel interpretation and social action.

In the particular context of CADISE, superficial similarities could easily mask differences of history, tradition and belief, a fact that in turn could make communication and collaboration between partners problematic. Moreover, there are few sanctions that members could use in relation to each other in a collaboration of equals, and one that is by definition a voluntary association in which development can only be achieved on the basis of mutual consent. When thinking about collaboration being managed along the three related dimensions of strategy, context and process, it is important to acknowledge that evolving a successful culture is dependent on the ability to manage honest communication (in turn leading to trust and building reciprocal confidence), that allows for surfacing fears/anxieties and testing assumptions, and that can build on successes as well as reviewing the group's performance.

Pitsis, Kornberger and Clegg suggest that project cultures should be designed to enable differences to be articulated and recognised as well as processed appropriately into action. They note (2004:50) that interorganisational collaborations will usually be arenas characterised by multiple and conflicting modes of professional
rationality and this fits with reports from fragmentation studies where ambiguity provides a protective shroud from the meaninglessness of everyday organisational life.

7.2 VISION AND MISSION: INTRODUCING THE CONCEPT OF STRATEGIC INTENT

Although the parameters of vision and mission have been addressed in Table 15 their critical importance requires a return to a more detailed discussion and their place in this research and as a key determinant of understanding collaborative management.

An individual's motivation can be useful in understanding organisational behaviour (Lawler 1983), in interorganisational contexts as well as institutional ones. The dynamics of the policy context of change, uncertainty, complexity sets the scene for why alliances are growing so significantly in the higher education context. Collaborating to compete in the higher education market place may be one significant dimension of this. A recent survey quoted as many as 28% of higher education institutions contemplating merger or major strategic alliances in the two years post 2004\(^2\) (the drivers for this change have been previously considered in Chapter 5).

Whereas Maslow’s classic work on motivation, argues that individuals satisfy lower order needs before focusing their attention on higher order needs, in contrast Alderfer (1969) reconfigures the notion of a hierarchy into three clusters: existence, relatedness and growth. Rather than supporting Maslow’s sequential approach to needs satisfaction, Alderfer argues that a “sublimation effect” allows a satisfied need to serve as a motivating factor to fulfil an unsatisfied need. This can set the framework for the consideration of ‘strategic intent’ (both formal and informal) of individual leaders in joining an alliance, how such intents are communicated within their respective institutions and how a strategic intent for the collaborative alliance is involved and maintained and especially where evolving strategic intents can be dashed by a dynamic context.

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7.2.1 SCOPING THE CONCEPT OF STRATEGIC INTENT

The concept of strategic intent suggested by Hamel & Prahalad (1989) emerged as a way of conceptualising how to ‘compete successfully in a hostile environment with limited resources’. The authors believed that strategy has tied itself into a straitjacket of narrow and narrowing perspectives. Because ninety five per cent of those working on strategy in organisations appeared to them to be economists and engineers with a mechanistic view of strategy they asked a simple question of where are the theologists and anthropologists who could, perhaps give broader and fresher insights?’ Their starting point was that strategy is multi-faceted, emotional as well as analytical, and concerned with meaning, purpose and passion. While strategy is a process of learning and discovery, it has not in much of extant literature been looked on as a learning process and for these authors this represents a huge blind spot.

Writing in the context of global commercial rivals Hamel and Prahalad point to the formation of strategic alliances where on-going competition seems out of reach by traditional methods. Many firms form a partnering relationship with the very companies that upset the competitive balance in the first place. Some attempts to imitate a competitor’s advantage may be doomed from the outset, because the imitation may be ‘seen through’ by the original initiator, allowing them to stay one step ahead. The imitators are thus forced into running hard just to stay in contention. Assessing the current tactical advantages of known competitors is no longer a viable option to understand the ‘resolution, stamina and inventiveness of potential competitors’. Sun-tzu, writing some 3000 years ago as a military strategist made this same point:-

*All men can see the tactics whereby I conquer, but what none can see is the strategy out of which great victory is evolved.*

Thus the proposed basis for the solution by Hamel and Prahalad is a complete strategic re-think, developing a new strategic approach that is ‘unfettered by conventional wisdom’. Companies that have risen to the global leadership over the past 20 years invariably began with ambitions that were out of all proportion to their resources and capabilities. But they created an obsession with winning at all levels of the organisation and then sustained that obsession over the 10 – 20 year quest for global leadership and this obsession is what is termed as ‘strategic intent’. Whereas strategic architecture may point the way to the future, it is the strategic intent which is ambitious and compelling and what provides the emotional and intellectual energy for the journey: “Strategic architecture is the brain, but strategic intent is the heart”.

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The concept of strategic intent is further elaborated by citing examples of vision and the desired leadership positions and the organisational criterion to be used to chart progress. Komatsu set out to "Encircle Caterpillar" Canon sought to "Beat Xerox", Honda aspired "to be an automative pioneer" NASA to "land a man on the moon" ahead of the Soviets and more recently Coca Cola's strategic intent "to put a Coke within arm's reach of every consumer in the world". All of these would have appeared seemingly impossible tasks at the time the intent was formulated.

Strategic intent is, therefore, a term for energising a company, and is considered to be something more positive than a simple war cry or company mission. It captures the essence of winning and is stable over time, aiming to "lengthen the organisation's attention span". One of the key approaches to understanding strategic intent is to compare the concept of strategic fit, predominantly a western concept, whereby corporate ambitions are curbed by existing resources with that favoured in eastern cultures of strategic intent - where leveraging resources to attain high corporate ambitions hold sway.

A table of comparison of these strategic approaches would look as follows:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIC FIT</th>
<th>STRATEGIC INTENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imitates market innovators</td>
<td>Permanently innovating, driving towards identified goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involves restrictive planning and rewards conventional wisdom</td>
<td>Challenges assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searches out niches in existing markets</td>
<td>Seek to find and control new markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ties ends and means</td>
<td>Fixes ends, but frees means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look for current competitive advantage</td>
<td>Embeds each advantage and then develops new ones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects future from present</td>
<td>Folds back future to the present (&quot;visionary swoop&quot;)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If one takes the final comparators in the table above, the research account will illustrate that 'folding back the future to the present' and formulating the 'visionary swoop' for some five or so years on from the report of the Dearing Committee was a prime intention for at least some of the founding members of the CADISE partnership. However, in doing so, the same intentions may not have appeared to underpin each of the 'visions' that each Chief Executive of the CADISE Policy Group had. It is thus an interesting proposition to view the research in the light of observing as part of the process of collaborative management, what the 'strategic intent' was,
whether or not the Chief Executives shared the same strategic intent, and what happens when individual or collective strategic intent is dashed by external factors such as a shifting policy backdrop.

The corresponding impact of the contrasting strategic approaches on the role and style of senior management is summarised below:-

**TABLE 18: COMPARISON OF IMPACT ON THE ROLE AND STYLE OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT BETWEEN STRATEGIC FIT AND STRATEGIC INTENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIC FIT</th>
<th>STRATEGIC INTENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Add limited value to product/market units</td>
<td>Add value by motivating whole organisation to share common vision of the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top down planning and communication</td>
<td>Planning and communication a two-way process, harnessing &quot;wisdom of the anthill&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See resources as constraint to planning horizon</td>
<td>Consistently stretch resources to achieve far-off vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-sighted: plans reveal today's problems</td>
<td>Long-sighted: plans reveal opportunities for tomorrow. Open new ways to achieve them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act as feasibility sieve</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers driven mainly by financial targets</td>
<td>Managers motivated by focus on core competencies and common intent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers moved frequently between product/market units</td>
<td>Managers allowed to develop deep knowledge of core businesses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To the external world, CADISE evidenced its mission and purpose through a formal Heads of Agreement signed by each Chief Executive Officer on behalf of their institution. The first Heads of Agreement was signed in May 1999 and as each new member joined, they formally signed the agreement. In addition, there are what could be termed as "mini strategic intents" as expressed on its website (www.cadise.ac.uk). Reproduced here in full, these are that CADISE intends to:-

- Act as a focus for liaison with key regional, national and international agencies, consortia and funding sources.
- Maximise participation in developing and delivering key economic, social, cultural and environmental strategies within the region.
- Stimulate and promote relationships with the creative and communication industries and provide them with advice and training opportunities.
- Develop a coherent framework of regional opportunity and progression, which will enhance student choice, widen participation and encourage life-long learning.
- Develop teaching/learning and research portfolios and enter new markets by spreading costs and risks and by sharing expertise and facilities.
- Add value by sharing of good practice.
- Build collaborative capability through the encouragement of personal contact and the support of enterprise.
- Encourage wider collaborative activity where this is beneficial both collectively and individually.
- Promote good practice in collaboration and publicise the role of the partners in this activity.

In summary, therefore, strategic intent is a method of competing for the future. One view might be that if higher education is operating in the marketplace and collaborative forms of organisation are being officially encouraged and burgeoning at the onset of the 21st century, then higher education institutions are in fact competing to get each other's skills, to maximise their 'share of the spoils' and to direct partnership activity to their own particular ends. Higher education is thus operating in a marketplace, and the market place has often been referred to as a brutal context. It has been said that if war is diplomacy by other means, then collaboration is competition by other means. The behaviour of competition is as old as humankind and the goal, to occupy the high ground, whether it is drawing on examples from military campaigns, cutting edge developments in information, communications and technology, or the survival of specialist higher educations in the small specialist institutional setting, all seem to require a fight with the mindset of, "if this is war, then fight we must". This has been true from author's such as Sun-Tzu writing some 3000 years ago in China on the 'The Art of War' through to more recent treatises such as Michael Porter’s Competitive Strategy (1980) and Competitive Advantage of Nations (1990).

8.0 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the process of collaboration and its management have been explored and relevant literature identified. The processes underpinning alliance formation and sustainability are slowly emerging as a substantive area for reflection and there is an attendant shift from writings purely on post-demise analyses of strategic alliances to more practical forms of understanding the processes that involve managing collaborative relationships.
Most of the informative literature on collaboration, partnership and strategic alliances grew up in business and 1990s management, with a little of it trickling in the world of higher education. These include, for example, Koenig and Thietart (1990) writing about mutual organisation as a new form of cooperation in high-technology industries and Vyas and others (1995) drawing on a number of dimensions found critical to success in their analysis of strategic alliances. In the same year Westhead and Storey (1995) reported on beneficial links between higher education institutions and high-tech firms and the overwhelming predominance of informal over formal links. Others included Leys and Wijgearts (1992), Gougeon and Gupta (1998), Chatterton and Goddard (1999) and Latham (2001). Various modes of strategy formation and collaborative process models have been considered including that of interorganisational synthesis by (Pitsis, Kornberger and Clegg (2004)). In particular, it is possible to provide a backdrop against which the practice and process of collaborative management from the CADISE research study can be analysed and interpreted. However, the theme that runs throughout all commentary on the area is that the strategic practice of process is an area that sorely lacks rigour and long-term empirical research. The original contribution of this research on understanding collaborative management in higher education, and the possibilities and parameters of partnership through the case study of CADISE is among other matters, to provide a close and long term study of the strategic practice of process.

9.0 OVERALL SUMMARY OF THE FOUR LITERATURE CHAPTERS TO SUPPORT COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

Four chapters on the literatures to support collaborative management have been included as part of this research, because of its emergence as a new and as yet ill-defined area. There has been a need to provide definitions and to consider closely aligned areas based on relational forms in order to both locate and demarcate the parameters of this research on the strategic partnership of CADISE. The three dimensions of ‘the policy context’, ‘the people’ and ‘process’ that provide the framework for the research each have (and in the case of the policy context, and people dimensions, substantial) bodies of relevant literature, but the academic writings that are of direct relevance to this study have to be detected and put together to form a coherent and cogent body of supporting literature. Scoping literatures on collaborative management has therefore been one significant contribution of the research in what has hitherto not been a mainstream area of academic interest.
Chapter 4 started by reviewing the language of collaborative management and the use of varying terminologies and definitions. It also illustrates the need for a sharp focus when drilling down to common denominators that promote a shared understanding of the area. Through looking at an emerging typology of models where institutions enter into broad cooperative relationships, it can be seen that they form a spectrum of relationship intensity from the simple cooperative agreement, through increasingly intensive forms of linkage relationship and affiliation to the pure merger models (Patterson, 2001). In addition it has to be remembered that higher education institutions may be involved simultaneously in several different forms of alliance – a practical fact that needs to be taken account in strategic partnering and when assessing the depth and commitment of the relationship. The position on the alliance continuum can range from what Patterson terms, good faith 'let's be friends' agreement through to 'let's be partners' contractual and affiliation forms, to the 'let's get married' full merger. Perhaps more importantly, an institution can cast its dice at any point on the continuum, having friends, partners and spouses, all, some or none.

In Chapters 5 and 6, the consideration of literatures according to a model of higher education policy context, processes involved in collaborative management and the people dimension (CEOs as collaborative leaders and formers of strategy) confirms the potential for collaborative management in its various organisational forms to be a large rambling and fertile territory of academic interest. Although much has been written about the elements in higher education of the challenge for managers in a turbulent and chaotic world – a world of mess (Stacey 1998), there is not much evidence that the fragmented literature to date on strategic partnerships and the skills involved in managing and sustaining such relationships has penetrated the operational consciousness and practices of many institutional leaders.

Given the policy contexts and the thrust of critiques written about institutional leadership and management, it could be as Duke has suggested, (Duke 2002:81) that tacit knowledge and instinctual practice may be ahead of study in the field of organisations working together. It is this very fact that makes the opportunity to research a 'live' and 'in it for the longer term' partnership an exciting and original challenge. Whether institutional leaders fully recognise it or not, networking and managing collaborative relationships have become by stealth an integral part of the strategic and senior institutional management role. However, they cannot be considered in isolation and as an emerging body of academic interest, following its
practice collaborative management may well be internally packaged as part of the role of an institutional leader in the 21st century.

Through a review of the historical factors in the global, UK and small institutional higher education contexts, the aim has been to set the scene for a consideration of the changing environment within which CADISE operates and the key issues of complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty facing the sector. Higher education institutions are changing because their world is changing and perceptions of their functions, role and utility change with it. Management in such a world can mean managing without sharply defined parameters and intrinsically means relating to a host of ‘others’ - interest groups, partnerships and stakeholders in varieties of interdependence and dependencies include new modes of communication, partnerships and trust. This contextualises the challenge for the CEOs, of what Charles Handy has called, the ‘sensemaking’ role of leadership in the world in which they find themselves. For institutional leaders this can involve connecting the macro and external with the micro and the internal (Duke 2002:66) to show a clarity that is founded in strong intellect and common sense which will inspire action by infusing it with meaning. The higher education environment at the time this research is undertaken is one that is infused with reflections on its role, value and ability to compete in the 21st century.

The second dimension of people and the literature related to leadership, emotional intelligence, the question of trust and the problem of conflict provide considerations of key components in what can be considered in more detail in the next chapter in terms of process dynamics literature. There is an almost iconographic notion of leadership comprising multi-talented individuals with a diverse skill-set, personal qualities and large social consciences. This poses a number of difficulties, and also sets a complex social scenario for collaborative management. Bolden (2004) has criticised the portraiture of new leaders as almost a return to the ‘great man’ or ‘heroic’ leadership notion, where individuals are venerated to the exclusion of team and organisation. He additionally notes (2004:16) that when you attempt to combine attributes from across a range of management frameworks, the result is an almost unwieldy and overpowering list of qualities.

As a final point, in the introduction to this chapter three questions were posed in terms of the approach to the literature of how we understand collaborative management:
is there anyone who has done exactly the same as me, and if so, what am I contributing that is new?

- where does this work fit in with what has gone before?
- why is my research worth doing in the light of what has gone before.

The answer to the first question would seem to suggest that as a distinct and identifiable area in the current context of strategic partnerships in higher education, there is little empirical 'up close and personal' research focused on collaborative management and strategy formation in the collaborative context. Indeed while this may have been implied in generic writing on alliances and considerations of the models and factors of success and failure, the process of strategy formation in collaborative management has not been researched as a separate building block. Overall, the literature reviewed for this research has thrown up an eclectic, diverse and fragmented set of writing and from a variety of perspectives reflecting the multi-faceted nature of the areas and perspectives. As yet, however, it does not have a home base of grounded and seminal writing, but 'wraps around' a multitude of disciplinary areas.

The answer to the second question, of where the research fits in to what has gone before, is that it gets to grips with the real world issues through reflective practice and seeks through focused and unflinching reflexivity to extend the literature on process dynamics, that has been called for on many fronts. Finally the response to its worth in the light of what has gone before, would suggest that as a contribution, it aspires to be one of analysis from CEO reflection and one of interpretation of a true drama in an unfolding, fast moving and constantly shifting perspective of a group of leaders of specialist institutions, seeking both solutions and to harness future opportunities through a collaborative context.

Whilst in a global context, (the US, South Africa, Europe) there is an acknowledgement that collaborative partnerships within and across organisational settings are flourishing as educational and service institutions cope with increased complexity and massive change, much of the focus is on broad brush descriptive information and evaluation of trends and implications, with little evidence of provision of strategic information exploring rationales, decision making processes and organizational change. It may well be as noted by Duke (2003) that whilst there is a wealth of informative literature appearing on collaboration, partnership and strategic alliances, with a little of it trickling into higher education, to date there is not much
evidence that it has penetrated the operational consciousness and practices of institutional leaders, although
tacit knowledge and instinctual practice may be ahead of the study of organisations working together.

(Duke, 2003:81)
CHAPTER 8 - THE ACCOUNT OF THE DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT SKILLS PROJECT AND CONCURRENT 'T' ACTIVITY AND ACCOUNTS OF 'T' BY OTHERS

1.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE ACCOUNT OF 'T' AND THE DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT SKILLS PROJECT

What follows in the section below is the account of the three year period from March 1999 to April 2002. It traces the first three years of the 'T' consortium and the consecutive development from its earliest planning of the HEFCE funded Developing Good Management project on Developing Collaborative Management Skills through to its completion and its culminating dissemination conference in February 2002. The narrative of the account ends with the 'T' Annual Conference in April 2002 when the new Chief Executive Officer of the HEFCE acted as keynote speaker and addressed the internal institutional communities of the 'T' partner institutions as a summation of both the project and a celebration of the first three years of 'T'. The account also incorporates accounts of 'others', external to 'T' who were interested and commenting on the consortium's progress as a model of collaborative management.

It must be remembered that the 'T' Policy Group were both learning about theoretical constructs to support collaborative management, at the same time as practicing their art and as such this account is contextualized as experiential learning. The substance of the account will, in effect be tackled twice. This first time is as a straight description of the period, with the minimum of comment. As discussed in Chapter 2, the data is drawn from both observation of activity that took place in the period; from minutes of meetings; correspondence between stakeholders; and documentation such as the reports generated by the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project and other internal processes.

The main findings will be presented and the account will be analysed in Chapter 9 with observations made in my capacity as a participant observer and with additional analysis of the consortium's documentation according to the three 'P' dimension of 'policy', 'people' and 'process'. The intention is to support the research through:

- tracing the development of 'T' to form a chronology
- providing a snapshot in time of both the relational policy context for the 'T' institutions with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) as a key stakeholder, together with an examination of their internal relationships with each other
• learning about the concept, skills and practice of collaborative management through the experience of the seven 'T' CEOs and Chief Executive Officers, who with the 'T' Co-ordinator formed the Policy Group


FIGURE 8: TIMELINE 1999 - 2000

In March 1999 'T' as a consortium of four institutions in art, design and communication held its inaugural meeting. I was in attendance as a visitor. My employment was not to commence until April, but it was thought useful that I should be at this first formal meeting since the news of the successful application for 'T's formation had been announced by HEFCE. It was here for the first time for me, that not just the business of 'T' as a consortium was discussed in detail, but the idea of what was termed 'collaborative management' and the innovative slant of a collective of specialist institutions in a subject specific area collaboratively working together.

It was an agenda item at the second meeting (May 1999) of the 'T' Policy Group that gave the opportunity for the four Senior Executives to discuss in more detail what a joint 'Good Management Practice' project might look like, and one that acts as an anchor for this research. HEFCE circular 99/28 the Consultation on the Fund for the
Development of Good Management Practice proposals called for responses to the initiative. I had been briefed to draft a 'T' response. The response served the purpose of launching 'T' as 'open for business', referencing the consortium through particular statements from its Heads of Agreement in the following way:-

To promote good practice in collaboration, and publicise the role of the partnership activity

To add value by sharing good practice in academic and management fields, applying larger critical mass to infrastructure and support services, and achieving economies of scale

(Source: 'T' Heads of Agreement, May 1999)

Additionally, it was stated that such a proposal would act as a platform for 'showcasing' individual institutional achievement and evidence the high record of good management practice and excellence in achievement. The following was therefore incorporated in the first official response from HEFCE to 'T'-

...this [Queen's Anniversary Prize] is a mark of excellence in the world of higher education ... demonstrating the inspiration and innovation that characterise the best in our education system

(Ashdown Institute - Letter from the Prime Minister on the award of the Queen's Prize, March 1999)

.....the Institute has a rational management structure suitable for the needs of a specialist institution. This includes all necessary control and feedback functions normally expected of an HEI.

(Bryanstone Institute: Evaluation of Internal Control Arrangements, HEFCE Audit Service, 1997)

... the Institute has an effective range of management controls, particularly those covering strategic planning and budgetary control. We found that management has a clear sense of direction, incorporating a strong sense of corporate accountability, and that initiatives to develop the Institute's systems are constantly being developed and progressed

(Coundon Institute: Evaluation of Internal Control Arrangements, HEFCE Audit Service, Oct 1997)

... the Institute has established itself as a centre of excellence in art and design with a national and international profile. In the 1996 Research Assessment Exercise, the School achieved a 5 rating in the Art and Design assessment

(Priory Institute: Evaluation of Internal Control Arrangements, HEFCE Audit Service, 1997)

The response to the consultation took place at the end of May 1999, some six weeks after 'T' had formally declared itself as open for business. Whilst the Policy Group was aware of the potential timetable for putting together a proposal, the collation of
material from individual institutions and general mapping of institutional practices toward shaping a bid was a task that went on in the background.

In particular the Chair of the Policy Group, (who had been formally confirmed in this role at the March meeting) gave a strong steer about engaging in this area, as did the Chief Executive of Bryanstone Institute who would later lead the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. As an early initiative for 'T', the process as to who would act as lead institution in any given project was not sophisticated, and was subject firstly to discussion and secondly, to decision. At the point of consultation only, no expression of interest to lead the project had been made, and this was to be decided at a later meeting. It was agreed that in terms of processes and protocols in relation to the lead institution for a 'T' project that there would be both institutional and collaborative implications. Specifically questions needed to be asked and discussed before identifying the lead in relation to:-

- who had the capacity/resource to lead a project?
- was there any particular history of expertise in the particular initiative area, that might be more persuasive to the funders in a competitive bidding situation?
- who would wish to be identified as the lead in this project? or
- should it be a rotational opportunity? - with each institution having a particular 'bite at the cherry' as bidding initiatives presented themselves

2.1 SHAPING THE PROPOSAL

The call for Stage 1 expressions of interest in the Developing Good Management Practice Fund arrived in the HEFCE prospectus, invitation 99/54 in August 1999 with a deadline of October 22nd 1999. At this point 'T' was becoming active on a number of fronts, having bid under widening participation and the HEFCE/DFI Innovation Fund. At the same time the annual bidding round for HEFCE 'Additional Student Numbers' posed a collaborative opportunity, not because 'T' had come to the point of joint planning, but because it was more comfortable to identify the lesser step of sharing intentions and evidence this to HEFCE by the submission of an overarching letter of support from the Chair of the 'T' Policy Group.

A key issue that had emerged with bidding initiatives was whether I, as the 'T' Coordinator should be writing proposals, or whether the consortium should nominate someone from the lead institution to write the bid. The first practice, would suggest
an amendment to the 'T' Co-ordinator role of purely being a conduit and collaborative interface, whereas for some institutions, the second presented an additional capability and resource to engage in otherwise unachievable special initiatives. This was a theoretical debate as the Policy Group had its fourth meeting in the summer of 1999, but by September, when the writing of proposals required an action, practice emerged that it was the 'T' Co-ordinator who identified champions who were keen to work with her. However, sometimes, pressures and volume of work from institutional perspectives precluded the additional workload of institutions writing a collaborative bid and in that case the 'T' Co-ordinator would write the proposal. This is what happened with the sequence of the Widening Participation proposals, the DTI/Innovations proposal and the Good Management Practice bid, later to be known as the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project.

2.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 'DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT SKILLS' PROJECT TO THE PRACTICE OF COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

It was implicit and understood that this Good Management Practice proposal, if successful, would be a high level project, evidencing the commitment of the Senior Executives to the process of both collaboration and collaborative management. It would be focused on them, and the directive (agreed after debate at Policy Group) was that the 'T' Co-ordinator should work with one of the CEOs in shaping the proposal. There was no great discussion on the distinction between the terms 'collaboration' and 'collaborative management' their use being adopted interchangeably and becoming part of the common language of 'T'. Ideas for subjects and themes were mooted, (as recorded in early drafts of the bid) and inter alia related to the development of inclusive leadership in a wider marketplace; the management of IT in individual institutions in the HE Art, Design and Communication sector. 'T' Policy Group minutes of May 1999 record that whatever was decided upon:

...there had to be a strong response and evidence the focus of a consortium already in operation and developing good co-operative management practices

The briefing notes for the 'T' Policy Group meeting in September 1999 record also that the Chief Executive of HEFCE and the HEFCE SE Regional Consultant:

would be looking for us to be active in this area as this is one of the real 'raison d'êtres of 'T"

(Chair of 'T' Policy Group, Briefing Notes, September 1999)
At this point the context of collaborative skills necessary to manage consortia activity was emerging as a focus, but the 'hooks' on which a proposal could be framed varied considerably and were difficult to reconcile. One suggestion, again recorded in early drafts of the proposal, wrote of the emerging area of the collaborative skills necessary to manage the impact of e-business on Consortia and seemed to suggest that this was a common cause among the partners that could acknowledge and accommodate individual and distinct institutional missions. The need to develop cost efficient management frameworks and models "which could be utilized to good effect by small specialist colleges" (Policy Group Minutes: May, 1999) was also a dominant theme.

The flow of suggestions for the substance of the project necessarily reflected different starting points for project members because of their respective institutional cultures and strengths and ranged from a spectrum of interests for harnessing future and digital technology through to 'art' teaching, learning and research.

Draft 1 of the Stage 1 expression of interest had identified the need for and the value of working with a Business School. Members of the Policy Group had been active in shaping and promoting a successful proposal to be led by the Faculty of Art & Design at the University of Brighton that would act as the Learning & Teaching Subject Network for Art, Design and Communication. It therefore seemed a sensible strategic move to elicit the support of the Business School at the University of Brighton, both because of the link with the newly emerging Subject Centre in Art, Design and Communication, and also because the Vice Chancellor of the University, was an active proponent of the benefits of collaboration in the national context.

By September 1999, the 'T' Co-ordinator had gleaned views from the Policy Group collectively, had engaged in a number of in-depth discussions with the Chair of the Policy Group and with the CEO of the member institution who would emerge as the lead institution for the project. There was broad agreement on the importance and need to bid, and an understanding that 'T' was well placed as a going-concern. However, the task of translating and meshing the ideas into a coherent bid still posed a challenge.

At the Policy Group Meeting on September 16th 1999 it was agreed that Bryanstone Institute would lead the Good Management Practice project and that Professor Jamie Close would be the CEO applicant on behalf of 'T'. The areas of collaborative
management, leadership and best business practice were discussed and yet another
tack was introduced of whether there should be an international student dimension.
Further discussion developed about the role and merits of the 'practitioner manager' versus the 'academic manager', and the agenda item was also discussed in the context of competitive and 'rival' bids. Earlsdon Institute, who at the time was not part of 'T' was working with consultants and had sent a letter to three of the 'T' partners, in their institutional capacity asking whether they would wish to join their proposal. It had been suggested by that partnership that it 'would have considerable chance of success'. A degree of indignation was expressed by individuals at Policy Group and it felt appropriate that a 'T' response on behalf of the three institutions be drafted. This acknowledged the merits of the competing proposal, but clearly indicated that:

*a 'T' proposal has already been formulated and is in an advanced state of development.*

The final weeks leading up to the submission of the Stage 1 expression of interest were quite intense, for me as 'T' Co-ordinator and involved my working closely with both the lead institution CEO as well as the Chair of the Policy Group. Weaving together a proposal to the satisfaction of the Group, being able to flesh it out and demonstrate supporting evidence and performance measures under the appropriate headings that HEFCE required was quite a challenge. At one stage it appeared as if there were two completely separate bids being written with competing interests. It was with help from the Chair of the Policy Group that the proposal got back on track, ensuring that the project was grounded and rolled out in the context of professional development for 'T' Senior Executives. Slowly the proposal came together, as Bryanstone wrote some aspects, the Chair of the Policy Group suggested others and the 'T' Co-ordinator meshed these together and researched underpinning areas.

The day that the proposal was due to go to HEFCE was also a learning curve in terms of protocols and process issues that could occur. It had been decided that in terms of marking institutional responsibility, the proposal should be signed and sent off from the lead institution. On my arrival at the lead institution, it appeared that the copy of the bid that had final modifications made to it and been signed off by the Chief Executive, had been an early draft and one which was taking the project in a considerably different direction from the one that had been agreed. Understandably the personal assistant to the Chief Executive was unwilling to listen to representations that this could not be the one that went to HEFCE and a few frantic
conversations took place with the CEO who was offsite, and the Chair of the 'T' Policy Group (the 'T' Co-ordinator's line manager) before it was resolved that the later version would be the one that took precedence.

There was then a significant wait to know whether or not 'T' had been successful in passing from the Stage 1 Expression of Interest through to Stage 2, and a particularly acute one, in the circumstances. If the bid failed, the post-mortem into the mix-up would come more into focus. The result came through in the Christmas vacation of 1999 when 'T' heard that it had been one of 34 successful bids from the 156 submitted that had progressed through to Stage 2 and now a proposal had to be shaped to reach the funding council by February 2000.

2.3 THE QUESTION OF T's SIZE

Meanwhile, in the autumn of 1999, as part of the wider 'T' agenda, the 'T' Policy Group had been considering the implications of enlarging the consortium. The Heads of Agreement, the 'T' formal memorandum of understanding had clearly expressed in section 4.1 of the agreement:-

The consortium is not exclusive: we expect membership to evolve. We also expect partners to continue to engage independently, and openly, in a range of relationships.

('T' Heads of Agreement, May 1999)

A couple of institutions had expressed interest in what was going on with 'T', and were actively questioning what its purpose was as well as picking up on the fact that whereas talk of partnership and collaboration in the context of 21st century HE provision in the sector was rife, a number of colleagues in small specialist institutions within a geographical region had actually forged forward and framed a formal relationship that had secured HEFCE funding on more than one front. Earlsdon Institute had registered its disappointment as a specialist art & design institution in the south east region, that it had not been included in the original formation, and letters of explanation were sent which referred to the decision not to include Earlsdon based on the experimental nature of collaborative learning and management with a small core of institutions in the first instance and that the optimal number should be small, and no larger than four.

At Policy Group discussion with regard to expansion (and the need not to appear exclusive) had related to the inclusion of another art & design institution, and
specifically one that had registered its interest through networking. In the event the next member to actually join 'T' was a specialist institution in performing arts. This happened in the context of broadening membership generally and because the strategic discussions that were taking place at Policy Group related to whether 'T' was grounded in its geography, its subject specialism, or the more strategically significant bond of 'delivery' in the context of specialist institutions.

Discussions about specialist institutions as recorded in the minutes of November 1999, recognised that although there had been a decrease in the number of specialist institutions in the last decade, there were a number of small performing arts institutions coming into the publicly funded HE sector who had the potential to be 'connected' with members of 'T'. Two performing arts institutions that had potential to become full members of 'T' were discussed. The first to join generated interest through conversations its CEO had engaged in with one of the 'T' partners, and because of its imminent geographical relocation, from the one part of London to another, whilst the latter had a similar interest in expanding their collaborative agenda and could see the potential in becoming a member of 'T'. In this context, and because the discussion centred on 'complementarity' of specialist institutions as well as the 'commonality' of issues the Chair of the 'T' Policy Group agreed to go first to Holyhead Institute to and talk about 'T'. The criteria for 'knocking on the door' and how to gain entry to 'T' were not at this time clear. Despite, this, however, the timetable for entry was very quickly agreed and the Heads of Agreement signed in December 1999, whilst discussions with the sixth institution, Sunnybank, continued.

It was, therefore, against this backdrop of a new and increasing membership that the Stage 2 proposal for the HEFCE Good Management Practice initiative was drafted and appropriate changes in the funds requested in order to cover the fifth 'T' member who had joined before the Stage 2 proposal on the Developing Collaborative Management Skills proposal was submitted.

2.4 STAGE 1 OF THE ‘DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT SKILLS’ PROJECT PROPOSAL THROUGH TO STAGE 2 (JANUARY – APRIL 2000)

The period of time between the notification of success and the submission of the Stage 2 proposal saw various things happening both within the sector and within 'T' and in anticipation of a successful stage 2 Good Management Practice bid. HEFCE was anxious that links and synergies between successful Stage 1 bids be explored,
and linked to this 'T' had also been approached (initially through Coundon Institute), about being part of a proposal on the European Excellence Model. However, the impetus to ensure 'T' was adequately preparing for its own Stage 2 bid remained a top priority. The idea that HEFCE would be fully aware of its aspirations was evidenced by trying to arrange a meeting with those responsible for steering it at HEFCE. In the event the planned meeting did not materialize and neither did the proposed HEFCE meeting for successful Stage 1 bidders. Thus research for the Stage 2 proposal took place with the latest HEFCE guidelines only and much effort was expended in terms of quantifying both financial gain and value added - a key success factor that HEFCE was looking for.

The immediate push at the end of January 2000 from the CEO of the Lead institution for the project was the need to visit other collaborative models to gain a better understanding of experiences elsewhere. The University of Wisconsin federation in the mid-west United States was highlighted. Much was being discussed about this US exemplar in the educational press and references made in Policy papers. It was also well known that the HEFCE Chief Executive elect championed this model as he himself had been a visiting Professor there between 1980 -1983 and had recently led a high level delegation of UK experts there for a visit to learn more. The first step for 'T' in translating the aspiration of a visit to Wisconsin into action (and in anticipation of a successful bid) was to enquire about the interest and availability from members of the Policy Group to make this trip. At Policy Group there were various discussions about the efficacy of the 'T' members being seen to visit the US at the beginning of the project, but the case was made by the CEO of the lead institution that it would be necessary to 'kickstart' the project. This concern about 'T' being seen to be taken seriously and Policy Group awareness of how the outcomes of the project would be perceived, can be evidenced by one of the responses to an initial email request for expressions of interest in joining the visit to the US :-

...... I am happy to do it but I do take the Chair's point that it does not look good if we are all seen to be going on a 'jolly' (not that it would be, though I am sure it could be rather fun... so I am up for it if you need the numbers but will happily stand down in order to send out the right messages to all concerned.

(email correspondence Feb 10th 2000)

In the event it was agreed that a delegation of three, the CEO of the Bryanstone Institute, ('T' identified project lead institution), one other CEO and the 'T' Coordinator, (who it was emerging would be writing up the project) would visit the US
and that the best time of the year would be the end of April or early May. At this stage, decisions about the visit had been taken but no contact had been made with the University of Wisconsin, as it was unlikely to be known whether the proposal had been successful until the end of April. The 'T' Co-ordinator was, however, instructed to go ahead and make contact and the necessary arrangements for a visit. The starting point was a contact in this country who had been involved in organising the visit for the senior UK delegation of government, funding council and university representatives. This lead proved fruitful and 'T' was put in touch with the contact at Wisconsin who had organised the itinerary for that UK visit, and it was soon agreed that a similar visit be prepared for the 'T' delegation.

Professor Jamie Close and the 'T' Co-ordinator continued to work on the proposal, sourcing articles and exemplars on collaborative models and their impact on organisational infrastructure and by the middle of February it was absolutely clear that the components of the bid would be:-

- researching models of collaboration (both desk-based research and visits to exemplars of collaboration to discuss governance, policy and management issues);
- mapping individual institutional cultures in order to define a collaborative culture and to facilitate cultural change;
- examining the impact of technology on collaboration.

In the costings for the proposal, amendments were made to take account of the fact that a fifth college had joined the consortium in December 1999 and also the duration of the project was decreased for funding purposes because of an intuition on the part of Professor Jamie Close, CEO of the Bryanstone Institute, that this project should not be prolonged, but be very focused. At the same time, and with prompting from HEFCE, synergies between several of the bids that had got through to Stage 2 of the Good Management Practice initiative were identified, and as a result of this the 'T' proposal was given added support from a bid prepared by HESDA, the then national Higher Education Staff Development Agency.

The 'T' proposal was endorsed by the Policy Group and with none of the drama of the Stage 1 bid the Stage 2 proposal was seamlessly posted to HEFCE on March 3rd 2000. The result that the proposal had been successful, arrived on April 17th, just over a week before the 'T' delegation was due to visit Wisconsin and it was with a sense of relief and eager anticipation that the CEO of the lead institution conveyed to

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me his belief that the visit to Wisconsin was one now condoned by the Funding Council and was now seriously legitimated.


FIGURE 9: TIMELINE 2000 - 2001

3.1 SETTING THE DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT SKILLS PROJECT UP: VISIT TO THE US FEDERAL MODEL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

Much has been written about the US Federal Model of the University of Wisconsin System, and as the first landmark activity of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project by 'T' its purpose was to 'kickstart' the project. The details of the visit and the main lessons learnt have been written about in some detail in the publication that resulted from this project (Goodwin & O'Neil: 2002). The focus in this account is thus on the description of the visit and its impact on the project, rather than on accounting the detail related from the Wisconsin model itself.

The visit at the end of April 2000 by the 'T' delegation of Professor Jamie Close, Professor Alex Searle and the 'T' Co-ordinator was to last three days and include a morning session with the Vice President of the University of Wisconsin System - Administration at UW-Madison (the pride of its system as a global player and one of its Doctoral Universities), followed by lunch together with other senior colleagues. In
the afternoon, the delegation were to drive from the hub of UW- Madison some 200 miles north west to the UW- Stout campus, one of eleven comprehensive universities in the UW- System. At UW-Stout a series of interviews were arranged with Senior Executives at their four year student campus with the Art & Design Faculty and with a partner Further Education institution, the Chippewa Valley College.

Considerable factual information was gathered from the visit that could inform the project in terms of the model and the people and process issue. However, what was equally of value to me and this research was the opportunity for the first time to hear two 'T' CEOs, other than the Chair of the Policy Group, both recount 'T's embryonic history and champion the consortium as a model of collaborative management. They were thus acting both as ambassadors and advocates for the consortium.

On the first day in the US, at the meeting with the Vice President of the UW System Administration at Madison the following explanation was given about the formation of 'T' and the context of the UK Higher Education System. Extracts from the explanation given by Professor Close, together with those by Professor Searle on day at UW-Stout are related in some detail because of the significance of their relaying and setting out the 'story' that emerged as the basis for 'T'. Up until this point, I had only observed their consensual approach in Policy Group, and not seen them as ambassadors for 'T' in their own right.

Professor Close's explanation to the Vice President of the System-Administration at the University of Wisconsin, Madison was as follows:-

...we got together about 2 years ago and said look let's look at the possibilities of collaboration. We didn't in a sense at that point really know what it meant. We thought well, you know let's kind of work together, and it was sort of well intentioned. So we then wrote to the Funding Council for England and said look this is what we intend on doing. Can we have some money and they said 'OK there's the money, go away and get it sorted', and so we employed Bethan, the first and only co-ordinator between us. These institutions have now grown to seven and we have a mass of about 9000 undergraduate students and an overall income of about £34million, which is small and in the South East of the UK. Our consortium covers the Art, Design and Performing Arts in a particular region, so it has a kind of focus in a sense"

The following was offered as the explanation of why the 'T' delegation embarked on the visit to the US:-

...and we then kept hearing this thing said - the Wisconsin model,- so we thought that this would be useful to us and so we wrote to the Funding Council again through its bidding process saying that we would be interested
in looking at models of collaborative management in higher education in the US, in Europe and in the UK. This was to determine really what our model could look like. We were saying look there's no point sitting in England re-inventing the wheel... if someone has taken it much farther down the road, can we go and have a look at them, can we get some information about how they work, their strengths and weaknesses, so that we can then say, well ours is not the same, it's a bit different, but we can learn from other's experience.

A particularly valuable insight into the two attendant CEO institutional perspectives, both as a member of 'T' and 'T's context vis a vis the UK higher educational context was gleaned from the following:-

The English higher education system is one that you would never invent. You know it's something that's grown up and we have 143 universities and colleges of higher education, each completely autonomous, so you can imagine it's a nightmare system where small institutions like us- represent hanging on the coat tails, if you like - of big institutions, such as Imperial College and the University of London. And it is those big institutions that drive all the funding methodologies, everything.

So we, as it were, came along behind it, and thought two years ago, as Alex has said, that there are government moves to rationalize this system. Our funding masters want some rationalization but no one is prepared to say what or how. So rather than waiting until we're pushed, we thought, well it might be useful to look at several collaborative partnerships between like minded institutions, and because we knew each other, we took it further.

At the moment 'T' is a very generalist model in the sense that we meet once a month, we do joint bidding to the Funding Council for additional student numbers, but still within the autonomy of the institutions.... So his institution is autonomous and so is mine. We each have our own Board of Governors and so in a sense we're looking at the relationship between autonomy and collaboration and collaborative management and whether you have to lose something in order to gain some of the other issues. And we're still in the very early days, so we're doing a research project for our Chief Executive officers on models of collaboration.

At the University of Wisconsin, Stout the following day, similar narrations about the development of 'T', the formulation and aspirations for the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project and the purpose of the 'T' visit to the US, took place. This time it was an account by Professor Searle of Ashdown Institute, talking to the Chancellor of UW-Stout that was particularly striking. This contextualized very clearly his individual take on the policy context and his personal commitment to 'T':

I'm a CEO of a specialist college of Art, Design and Media, and again like Jamie, we have sort of two jobs. We're CEOs and Chief Executives and the Chief Executive role is really related to a shift that took place from 1986 in the UK, which was to make institutions corporations. So we have corporate status and that awarded us a significant degree of independence both academically and with the potential for a more entrepreneurial approach to college work. We are identifying a sort of, well not so much a reaction, but a realisation that competition between what are relatively small institutions
within a relatively small country may rather than producing an entrepreneurial plus, actually produce a competitive minus. That is a very strong driver to this consideration of collaboration within which the collaborative framework will be more sensible about the management of competition between institutions.

It is a fact that within the UK, the corporate competitiveness has often led to similar programme offers in perhaps as many as six institutions in one city so that there has been a lot of resource devoted to advertising and recruiting students who might otherwise go to one. We could actually improve the curriculum offer amongst the six institutions by sensible cross management, and this is very much an issue within the contemporary agenda for us. It's an issue too which is linked to a very strong commitment by what is still a relatively new government in the UK to widen opportunity which is to bring in, rather as Jamie said earlier, a wider group of people who can experience higher education.

Now this is having a very traumatic effect on the traditional system, because the traditional system rather like the 'Ritz Hotel' is absolutely open to everyone. The slight snag is whether everybody can pick up the check and pay it. So there has been a sort of quasi-openness. In fact you know that anybody can go to Oxford but actually very few people really can go because there are lots of informal filters that are both fiscal and cultural that render down to make, what I think, internationally is a fairly accurate stereotype of the British educated classes. It would be embarrassing to say that we three represent those very much, but there is a certain sense that even from people whose education came through the changing period of the 60's there is much more in my own background which relates to the 19th century philosophy of liberalism than the 20th century notions of egalitarianism and that is something that's being wrestled with at the moment. It's really the 19th century issue being taken on in the 21st century. We've taken a century leap—it's taken that long to get there. What of course it will mean for us is a reconsideration of what is the award that students take in the post-18 school period and that's traditionally focused upon the BA Honours Degree which compared with the American model is a highly specialist programme of study.

In many ways Jamie and I represent, as do other colleagues in 'T', very specialist programmes of study where the student actually undertakes for a 3 year period what the title of the award says. They don't undertake alongside that any more general education. And that intense specialism is very expensive and has also in its nature a rather elite profile. We have learned from our Secretary of State for Education that we should be looking toward more general foundation awards and the notion of a foundation degree has been launched which will be of 2 years duration and will most likely be more general in nature, but with a strong vocational emphasis. As more people come into the system, it means that a different sort of award is to be given which is credit based, highly flexible with a potential of online or in-work tuition with all the sorts of things which are fairly common place in the United States. So it is of no surprise to you that, you know, we are craving your patience for a day, just to learn a bit more of the system and of the character of provision within a state university, because it is very very different from the sort of provision I make.

The last thing I might say is that we are microscopic in size when set against your experiences. My institution has 2000 students. As Jamie said, with the seven institutions we have 9000 students in total. It is very, very small, but
we can, by virtue of that smallest, achieve particular focus, and so Jamie, myself and others could actually write down a list of personalities that would even be known here in the United States that we, as we say "we punch way above our weight" because that, that specialism produces stars, but stars are the antipathy of a widely participating company, because for every star there are 100 non-stars and it's very challenging for us to know how we go with this in years ahead.

Following the meeting with the Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Stout and because of the technological component of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project, a later session took place on e-learning with the Heads of their Management teams and the Art & Design Faculty to seek their views on how the University of Wisconsin system worked in practice. The afternoon was taken up with a visit to the Chippewa Valley Technical College, where it was possible to see a video conferencing system employed as part of the curriculum. In the evening a meal with the Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin, Stout and members of the Executive team, further explored the value and benefits of the system.

3.2 BACK AT 'T' IN THE UK - FIRST STRATEGIC PLANNING AWAY DAY, MAY 2000

'DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC INTENT FOR 'T'

The context of the first 'T' strategic planning away day was that 'T' had been operating as a consortium for 13 months, had held nine Policy Group meetings, had secured over £0.5 million in funded projects across a range of initiatives including Widening Participation, Good Management Practice, and now had other special initiative funding proposals in its sights, as well as overseeing the work of the 'T' consortium itself and the two start-up projects (funded under the Restructuring & Collaboration Fund). 'T' was now grounded as a 'going concern' and the focus of this first planning day was to develop a 3 – 5 year strategic plan. Of the initiatives on the horizon, the first centred on the new qualification, the 'foundation degree', following the landmark announcement by Secretary of State at the University of Greenwich in February 2000 who branded foundation degrees as a "new qualification for a new century". The other was a significant opportunity to bid under the Higher Education Reach Out to Business and Community (HEROBC) fund, and 'T' saw this as an opportunity that allowed the partners to cluster around work related to the HE/business interface, and to build on the findings of the successful start-up project in this area, Creative Learning Futures.

The Strategic Planning Away Day was scheduled to combine a workshop on the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project with the Strategy planning
meeting. This was because of the practical constraints on Chief Executives’ time and the logistical requirements of getting them together as the project team. Things had moved on pace with regard to the ‘T’ infrastructure and its constituency. The Chair of the ‘T’ Policy Group, who as Deputy Director had represented his institution, now had a ‘new boss’, the Principal and Chief Executive of Coundon Institute, who was attending a ‘T’ meeting around the table at the Strategy Planning Away Day for the first time. Additional complications were that the Chair himself had secured a new appointment and was to leave Coundon as Deputy Director in July 2000 and to become CEO and Chief Executive elsewhere. This, to add yet another dimension of complexity was the fifth partner institution, Holyhead Institute, who had joined the consortium five months earlier. Holyhead Institute was represented at this ‘T’ meeting for the very first time, by the Chair of ‘T’s (soon to be) Deputy CEO.

**TABLE 19: ATTENDANCE PROFILE AT STRATEGIC PLANNING AWAY DAY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Represented By</th>
<th>Meeting History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashdown Institute</td>
<td>Professor Searle, Principal and CEO</td>
<td>Founder member of ‘T’ 10th ‘T’ meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryanstone Institute</td>
<td>Professor Close, Director and CEO</td>
<td>Founder member of ‘T’ 10th ‘T’ meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coundon Institute</td>
<td>Professor Aviss, Principal and CEO</td>
<td>1st meeting at ‘T’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holyhead Institute</td>
<td>Deputy CEO (Acting CEO)</td>
<td>Substitution as representative for CEO Elect (the Chair of ‘T’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priory Institute</td>
<td>Professor Diggins, Principal and CEO</td>
<td>Founder member of ‘T’ 10th ‘T’ meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnybank Institute</td>
<td>Professor Rhodes, Principal and CEO</td>
<td>1st meeting at ‘T’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair of ‘T’</td>
<td>Professor Pope, Deputy Director of Coundon Institute</td>
<td>Founder member of ‘T’ CEO Elect of Holyhead Institute 10th ‘T’ meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘T’ Co-ordinator</td>
<td>‘T’ Co-ordinator</td>
<td>10th ‘T’ meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Against this backdrop, and perhaps because of it, one of the agenda items for the Policy Group was the duration of the Chair’s membership – something that had not been clearly agreed. From early discussions in the life of the consortium this had been understood to be for 3 years, but it had never been formally written down. Various questions were being asked by individual CEOs on the basis that it was thought that it might be an annual rotating Chair.

Peripheral considerations relating to lunch arrangements for the day had already thrown up a difference of views because certain members were keen to have a good lunch at an external venue and others were keen to keep the momentum of the working day with a short ‘in-house’ lunch break, and diffuse any suggestion of ‘T’ indulging in ‘club-like’ activity. The morning agenda was to be focused on developing a strategic intent for ‘T’, reviewing its internal and external audiences, its communication strategies and financial management, with the afternoon session
allocated to 'Firming up the Future' with the 'T' strategic plan followed by a Developing Collaborative Management Skills project meeting.

After formal welcome and introductions, the day commenced with a 'post-it', systematic process planning exercise on 'T' strategic intent. This was introduced by me, in my capacity as 'T' Co-ordinator. I wanted to use a fairly common method for sharing perceptions of issues, problems, solutions, priorities and for reaching a working consensus with a minimum of conflict. This, I deemed appropriate for finding the central issues in starting and sustaining 'T' and for teasing out the depths of what was on individuals' minds. I believed in the egalitarian nature of this exercise as everyone would be given an opportunity to record their views, outputs could be generated easily, but a depth of perception could be gleaned and preserved. This was in contrast to the lead taken and favoured by the Chair in tabling papers for discussion of future paths that could be chosen. After an introductory paragraph about what 'T' had achieved, a single sheet of paper sought individual views on seven areas. I felt these were pre-requisite sets of knowledge before we could move to a strategic plan. The areas were covered by simple questions:-

- What is 'T'?
- What could it be?
- What are its strengths?
- What are its weaknesses?
- What are the opportunities?
- What are the threats?
- What are its needs?

The responses to the 'post-its' were clustered, put on the wall as part of a fish-bone diagram and from that transferred to a simple list of the bullet points under respective headings which were then sent to the Policy Group. The ideal would have been to follow through to an Ishikawa Diagram with a full and frank discussion of all the issues and that to be an on-going theme both for the day and to underpin its process of strategy formation. What transpired was an initial resistance to doing the exercise, questioning whether this had to be done (possibly Chief Executives not having engaged recently in such management exercises), followed by undertaking it in a rather light hearted and jocular way. A brief but very interesting discussion about the content and clustering of the issues followed although time constraints were pressing. The exercise was not returned to on the day, although it was referred to
often as an empowering exercise, and at the end of this research as part of the field interviews with each Chief Executive I showed them again the list of 'post-it' responses (see Appendix 5) to ask them to gauge how far forward they thought 'T' had moved in the process of collaborative management in the 3 years since the exercise took place.

The Chair of the Policy Group facilitated the morning agenda items which commenced with a review of the 'T' membership, and a welcome to new members present: Professor Avis of Coundon Institute, Professor Rhodes of Sunnybank Institute and the Deputy CEO of Holyhead Institute (the latter in attendance prior to the new CEO taking up his post). The question of membership of 'T' and on-going constituency negotiations was discussed including updates on discussion about the impending membership of Earlsdon and the earliest date its CEO might be able to attend 'T' meetings. The accession of Earlsdon Institute to 'T', as the seventh partner institution to join, would make the critical mass of 'T' some 9000 students and a turnover of approx £34million of HEFCE funds per annum. 'T's membership represented many of the small specialist institutions in the London and south east regions, with just one representative residing in the south west. The feeling of the meeting was that 'T' should still be mindful of not closing down membership and that proper criteria for membership should be drafted so that the consortium would not be viewed as a 'club' (there was a distinct sensitivity to getting this balance right). It was noted that the addition of a dance school would be welcomed. The meeting discussed the strategic objectives for 'T' in the short term, including whether it had regional or national aspirations as a representative voice for the performing and creative arts, its relationship with and respective roles for it and SCOP, (the Standing Conference of Principals) and other HE agencies. There was a common view that 'T' was innovative and pioneering but equally there was a distinction between its purpose and those of other representative bodies such as CHEAD and SCOP and even the suggestion of a new national body for art and design specialist institutions that was emerging through an idea by Earlsdon Institute.

Individual partners present gave a verbal account of their rationale for joining 'T'. The themes of the commonality and complementarity of the 'T' offer emerged as a dominant consideration. It was agreed that over lunch individual partners should write a short rationale in respect of their individual stance on joining 'T' and this point would be revisited later in the day when issues relating to the strategic plan would be more fully discussed.
An agenda item to confirm the three year term of office of the Chair was tabled and given his personal change in circumstances (his move from Coundon Institute to Holyhead Institute as its new CEO), discussion followed the line of whether the Chair was a personal Chair that would move with its occupant, or was it a Chair given to the Coundon Institute as the largest and lead institution for HEFCE purposes within the consortium. There was a somewhat uncomfortable discussion where views were aired sensitively and it was resolved that the Chair was a personal role bestowed on the occupant as chief architect of 'T', and that therefore, when he moved institutions, the position would move with him for the remainder of the three year period.

Following on from this a number of operational considerations were discussed in respect of putting in place an improved 'T' infrastructure and there was general accord evident here. The introduction of the agenda item on the 3 - 5 year plan to set the scene before lunch gave a sense of anticipation about the business to be tackled later in the day. This would set the strategic steer for 'T' in the future addressing local, regional, national and international needs and contributions. However, when the group resumed after lunch, it could not regain its momentum and focus on the complexities of the task of the strategic plan. Two contributions were received in terms of input and focus on strategy, one from Professor Searle at Ashdown Institute and the other a much more developed paper, tabled by the Chair. Although there was discussion, there was no appetite to grapple the issues. The feeling, as my notes recorded, was that the timing of this was not satisfactory as three out of the eight people present were new members and all were getting used to new faces around the table. In the event the agreements that were secured were very broad and it was apparent that discussions were not taking place from an even and common denominator of understanding about what 'T' was or could be.

To the observer, it might appear that the ‘buy-in’ at this meeting was not the same from all members and that ‘steam-rollering’ the agendas would not work. There was an air of frustration in the room. The fall-back position appeared to be to make decisions on ‘easier’ operational items and the more difficult strategic questions were left on the back burner. The ideas outlined in the paper tabled by the Chair appeared clearly to be a step too far for some at that moment in time and there was no consensus on the way forward that the Chair might have anticipated or wished for from his drafted paper. My notes made at that time refer to a ‘difficult meeting and a degree of ‘filibustering’ before the safer territory about reporting on the Good Management Practice project was reached'.

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The reporting on the *Developing Collaborative Management Skills* project related to an account of the visit to the University of Wisconsin and a sharing of some of the lessons learnt. With regard to process, it was stressed that the viability of the project depended on the commitment and time made available by the 'T' CEOs and in this respect a timetable of meetings where CEOs attendant was required as the project team, was circulated. At this point there was discussion about the opportunity for more informal meetings over lunch on a rotational basis at each other's institutions, the suggestion being that the formality of the Policy Group meetings, inhibited a depth of discussion that might otherwise be achieved through exchange of views in more relaxed and congenial settings. It would also give the opportunity for the Policy Group to learn more about each other and their institutions. There was clearly something here about the role of social networks in the context of managing a complex collaborative management agenda and an intuitive sense that somehow the issues might be worked through more easily in a 'softer' setting. However, in the event none of the scheduled lunches took place because of pressures on CEO time, although the notion of more informal discussions over a meal was recognised as a 'bonding' activity and wherever business permitted it, the concept of the Policy Group meal was adopted and integrated into business (for example, the evening before the Annual 'T' Conference, where CEOs held a Policy Group meeting, and then was followed by an evening meal). This was often to be used as an informal barometer of how strong or weak commitment to current items of business were at any one time within 'T'.

In the next session each partner gave their rationale for joining the consortium. Discussion took place on the status of 'T' as an entity presently constituted, and what it would look like in the future. The question of whether, some twelve months in and with its success in bidding for regional funding initiatives, it should return to HEFCE using the success as a platform for securing more funds was discussed. An animated exchange took place on the fact that 'T' was formed for the institutions to work together, and there was a sense of 'self-congratulation' that it had predated the onset of special initiative opportunities. It was a 'voluntary association' and although it had been formed and recognised with HEFCE's blessing, it was reiterated that its formation was not at the behest of HEFCE. Earlier examples of successful consortia that had a sudden demise were recounted, with the warning that their thirst for funding and an indiscriminate chasing of special initiative funding opportunities, could be both a driver and a downfall. Such projects and funding did not always reflect the
mutuality that was seen as necessary to underpin and sustain a consortium in the long term.

The question about the cost of collaboration and the indirect costs of 'T' were discussed at the meeting, together with a call for these to be made explicit. This was the first time that costs had been directly raised as one of the precepts for the 'T' consortium laid down and agreed at its first meeting (March 1999), was that there would be a moratorium for twelve months on such discussions. The reasoning was that if valuable consortium time was spent on financial costing, it would never get past these discussions to plan and carry out potential business. Whilst the Chair of the Policy Group had a clear view, that if collaborative activity was focused on working out the costs versus the benefit at the beginning of consortia activity, it would never get off the ground, it was apparent that others around the table were now beginning to think about the gains to be made from collaboration against the activity required on their parts to sustain collaboration. The concern was that in the short and medium term while an alliance might increase effectiveness, in reality it might not achieve economy or efficiency gains because of its high transaction costs. Here, there needed to be a much finer judgement about whether the benefits would outweigh the costs. This in turn raised the difficult question of how a 'cost-benefit' exercise could be measured.

It was interesting that at this point in the meeting, there was a suggestion that a needs analysis of the partner institutions would be undertaken as part of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project, and a map of the different institutional cultures and 'commonality' or otherwise of offer would become evident from this. However, this did not actually happen. This suggestion was a reoccurring one during the life of 'T', and indicated the inherent tensions of whether 'T' as an organisation existed to serve the needs of its membership (a giving organisation), or whether 'T' was essentially a vehicle through which each of the members worked and which only existed through the contributions of its members (a receiving organisation). In the event, as will be seen, what resulted from the project, was not a mapping exercise and needs analysis, but more a requirement on the part of the membership to look at individual approaches that needed to be modified and achieved in order to define a collaborative culture.

During the planning day, it was recognised that much of 'T's business to date had related to non-academic issues, which supported the curriculum – a phrase later to
be suggested by one CEO and adopted by the group either positively or in a
derogatory manner as 'Gradgrind'. Discussion took place about whether 'T' as a
consortium was 'ducking the issue' or at best not grappling with the 'jewel in the
Crown' – that of the core academic territories and how closer synergies could be
achieved. It was noted at this meeting that the aspirations of 'T' were very much in
the academic arena. However, one institution shuffled uncomfortably at this as its
CEO stressed that 'T's value to him was not in this arena, (where he implied he had
'deepar' and more meaningful academic collaborations than with 'T'), but in the
administrative or 'gradgrind' areas where the small size of his institution made the
concept of 'T' particularly attractive. 'Value for money' and more 'back office'
functions offered immediate potential and in time it would allow for new areas of
academic activity to emerge. This is what happened, with 'T' positioning itself to
engage in areas of new and pre-competitive issues rather than tackling existing areas
where there might be inherent tensions relating to competition and duplication of
activity.

A first academic approach by 'T' had already commenced, with the visit by one
member of the Policy Group to Edexcel to discuss the potential for working together
in some way in relation to Foundation degrees and a Foundation Degrees working
group was to be set up.

3.3 PROGRESSING THE PROJECT: REPRESENTING THE DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE
MANAGEMENT SKILLS PROJECT TO HEFCE AND ITS OBSERVERS

Some four days after the 'T' Strategic Planning Away Day, Professor Close and the
'T' Co-ordinator were scheduled to meet with representatives from HEFCE. They had
been appointed as part of the normal monitoring and evaluation process for the
project and were to act as 'critical friends' to the project. The meeting was to take
place at Bryanstone Institute and the observers already had close contact with 'T' as
they were the HEFCE Regional Consultant for the South East and the HEFCE
Regional Adviser, both of whom had been familiar with 'T' from its inception.

At the meeting, the observers explained their role in relation to the project and the
fact that they had asked to be specifically involved in this 'T' project. They knew
about the evolution and work of the consortium and therefore felt that they could act
as an appropriate conduit for information feeding back to Senior Officers and the
Audit Consultant for the 'Good Management Practice initiative within HEFCE. It was
stressed that their role was a supportive one, and particularly to facilitate links with other Good Management Projects – particularly mentioned was the link with the MASHEIN project (the Management in Small HEis Network) that included many 'T' members as well as a number of specialist institutions and other generalist small institutions.

The HEFCE observers expressed their wish to be copied into minutes of the Steering Group and to attend any meeting (by invitation) where matters were discussed that could be of particular interest to HEFCE. They would, for example, be interested in attending the workshop on Collaborative Models of collaboration to be run by a facilitator from the Association of Commonwealth Universities, planned for July.

Information was feedback from the 'T' project in relation to progress – its project management and the mechanisms that were being put in place, and more significantly the feelings and views gained from the visit of the 'T' delegation to the University of Wisconsin. The latter included giving a general overview and reviewing the range of material collected as well as considering what lessons were learnt and how 'T' might incorporate this learning into the project. With regard to project management, draft internal meeting schedules were shared and also the range of meetings set up with external partners, consultants and personnel who might be either helping in informing or facilitating the project (particularly CENTRIM at Brighton Business School, CHEMS at the Association of Commonwealth Universities, and the Judge Institute of Management Studies at the University of Cambridge).

On behalf of the consortium, Professor Jamie Close initiated the conversation about 'inter-institutional' connectivity and how 'T' as part of the project could investigate possibilities in this area as an alternative to the 'physicality' of CEOs at the Policy Group always having to travel to one venue to meet. Technology, technological infrastructure and building technological capacity, he advocated, would be a real opportunity for 'T' institutions to make savings and to both improve the teaching-learning process as well as management capability within a geographically distributed entity.

However, at this point the discussion started to drift into territories about issues which arose naturally from 'T' strategy and had been discussed within the Policy Group. Professor Close took the opportunity of discussing with the HEFCE observers some of the more sensitive issues raised at the Strategy Day and the current thinking of 'T'.

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At this point I observed that there was a 'blurring' about what was being developed through formal business and agenda items at Policy Group as 'T' strategy and what was project territory of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills initiative. This was illustrated through the exchange with the HEFCE SE Regional Consultant who mirrored this confusion and appeared to be acting with a permeable membrane between his role as Developing Collaborative Management Skills project observer talking to the lead institution of the project and his role as SE Regional Consultant where the 'T' lead institution (for HEFCE purposes) was located. By not talking to the Chair but to the CEO of Bryanstone Institute, (the lead institution for the project, but one located in the London region and not the South East, other than through 'T') the question of who speaks for 'T'? (and in what capacity) came sharply into focus.

The substance of the issue that raised this confusion related to an item discussed at the planning day of whether or not 'T' partners might be able to bid in the name of 'T' for Additional Student Numbers (ASNs). Although not designed to be competitive within a region, inevitably numbers were allocated with policy considerations of avoiding duplication. The HEFCE Regional Consultant had a role to play in assessing the efficacy of institutional and collaborative bids. In his own capacity and as project lead the CEO of Bryanstone raised this question with HEFCE. The 'T' consortium would in effect be cutting across the regions and its number allocation would come from the south east because that is where the 'T' lead institution was located. While bidding in the name of 'T' might suggest forward movement in terms of evidencing an evolving and maturing consortium, (an action which in turn could lead to a platform for securing more funding under the Restructuring & Collaboration fund), the problem with 'T' bidding in its own name for ASNs was that this would be a very radical move and would highlight a shift from the autonomy of the individual institutions to an agreed 'T' responsibility. It therefore presented a big step change. The issue as part of the evolving relations of the Policy Group had been tabled as a possibility, but was not something that had been secured.

The HEFCE observers promised to take the points made by Professor Close back to the Funding Council and to get a response to his suggestion. When the response arrived, apart from the fact that it was the first time the Chair was aware of the discussion with HEFCE, he was concerned that:

...the dialogue over joint numbers, still at an early discussion stage within 'T', has been rehearsed with the Funding Council.
Of even more concern was that a discussion within the Funding Council had now been opened that could have impact on all the members of ‘T’ as a result of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. Email correspondence from HEFCE suggested that (translated into HEFCE’s view) their understanding was that ‘T’ institutions were: “mapping their courses to see whether there is potential for rationalisation” – a consequence that was viewed with dismay by the Chair and one that in his view was far too pre-emptive.

The response delivered via the HEFCE SE Regional Consultant suggested that there was no problem with a collaborative bid from a group of HEIs—and that indeed it was a move to be welcomed as an extension of the work that HEFCE supported through the widening participation initiative. There was no difficulty either in funding ‘T’ as a consortium, through a lead institution, if all the members (but not necessarily the lead institution) proposed to commit all their numbers to the consortium. It would, however, mean that the members would cease to have direct dealings with HEFCE in respect of HESES returns and funding. Individually each institution would have to comply with all the other accountability requirements, e.g. financial forecasts and statements, audit arrangements, and quality assurance.

If the ‘T’ members, however, wished simply to commit their growth numbers, or only some of them, to the consortium, then HEFCE would not be prepared to fund it as a consortium. This is because it would not be possible to identify separately and continuously which numbers remained part of the individual institution’s direct allocation and which were part of the consortium and the danger would be that without clarity or control, numbers could easily be double counted.

What was suggested by HEFCE in their email response, as an exception was:

if the institutions were proposing a novel development which would be distinctive and separately identifiable (and thus different) from any of their existing provision... If they do want to go ahead as a consortium - I would want to encourage them - the best way would be for them to throw all their places into the consortium and then to use the agreement between them to put boundaries around the movement of places between them, either as a fixed, long term arrangement, or subject to agreement each year. That would give them the flexibility they seek from us in the form of a joint MoSN but also safeguard the provision that each institution would not intend to share with the others.

(Email from HEFCE to ‘T’ Co-ordinator, June 7th 2000)

The levels and modes of communication going on here were now quite complex and had escalated both the agenda and the pace of dialogue quite significantly and to a
position where 'T' was not yet ready to engage. It also caused a problem because the Chair of 'T' was in conversation with the same Regional Consultant and was trying to shape another bid to HEFCE for further funds for 'T' as a project. At its most simple the dialogue opened through the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project would at least confuse the issue. His summation of the situation was as follows:-

I think we don't need hostages to fortune, as outlined by the HEFCE memo at this stage

The worry was that 'T' internal discussions and potential intentions might have been communicated at too early a stage and this would give a false perspective of where the consortium had got to. It could also result in added pressure to comply with some HEFCE strategic thinking.

By the time the issue was put to the Policy Group in July 2000, this exchange between 'T' and HEFCE became a matter of reporting to the rest of the Policy Group and the discussion on it was minimal, resulting in an agreement to keep the situation under review and to see how the business of 'T' unfolded. I observed, however, that this incident had been 'logged' by some as illustrative of an intent that had not yet been agreed and how simple it was for parties with a vested interest in 'T' to run away with ideas. It was too early to formalise along this path, and the agreed view with regard to ASN bidding and the relationship with HEFCE was that the example of the previous year should be followed - that individual institutions prepare their bid, to share their intentions and for 'T' to add value by supplying an overarching letter of support. This would detail the map of 'T' partner institutions bids as an extra incentive to gain additional numbers for partner institutions and include the statement that:-

The bidding for additional student places and funds for 2000-01 has been a matter of discussion and agreement by the consortium and the individual institutional applications in the current bidding round carry the full support of 'T'.

3.4 JULY 2000 - FIRST 'DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT SKILLS' WORKSHOP ON 'MODELS OF COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT'

This workshop again combined a morning CEO workshop with a Policy Group meeting in the afternoon. It broke with the tradition of holding the meeting on neutral territory in London (usually at the SCOP Offices, Woburn House, Tavistock Square) and instead it was held at Holyhead Institute, which was also located in London. The
morning workshop was facilitated by CHEMS, at the Association of Commonwealth Universities, who for a considerable period of time had been working in the areas of models of collaborative activity and whose Association had produced a number of publications (Fielden, 1991, 1999; Fielden and Markham, 1997; Lund, 1998). Around the table were four CEOs (from Bryanstone, Coundon, Priory and Sunnybank Institutes); the Chair of the Policy Group (CEO elect of Holyhead Institute); and the T Co-ordinator. Apologies had been sent by Ashdown Institute, whose CEO was unable to attend.

As part of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project deliverables, it was believed that there should be a typology of collaborative models, evident from recent trends in academic co-operation. It would then be possible for due consideration to be given to the shaping of ‘T’ and where it would be positioned in the typology – common territory between the strategic business of ‘T’ and the funded project. Thus the agenda for this first workshop as part of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project included reviewing some examples of models of collaboration, followed by a discussion of what model ‘T’ was and where it wanted to be in the future. This was to be followed by looking at ways of making collaboration work, with a focus on the operational mechanisms. The final discussion was on how the consortium would wish to operate with their chosen way of collaborating. The morning would both build on the preliminary desk and web-based research already embarked upon at the project proposal stage and the lessons learnt to date from model of Wisconsin as well as accessing the expertise of the facilitator in his understanding and experience of models in South Africa, and the US as Director of CHEMS at the Association of Commonwealth Universities.

The workshop can be described as participatory, although the recurring theme that was apparent was that not all of those around the table had a clear understanding of the context within which these models were being discussed. Some embraced the learning as something that would help take ‘T’ forward, whereas others came across as fighting a rear guard action, showing mild interest but no enthusiasm for the models and were always looking at it from an institutional perspective and questioning what it would do for their institution. What was also of note were those who did not actively participate at all.

The range of relationships that were reviewed and the typology that was derived indicated that in the Workshop facilitator’s view ‘T’ aspirations would lie somewhere
between the strategic alliance and confederal/federal model. However, given the lack of clarity of understanding about the workshop and no lines of demarcation between this project and the work of 'T' not all the Policy Group appeared at ease in this discussion.

Content addressed toward the 'confederal solution' end of the spectrum related to areas of control or indicators of autonomy, as well as to more fundamental issues. Amongst others things these expanded on the following questions in collaborative modelling: who is the legal entity? where does responsibility for governance reside? who receives the funds? who awards the degrees? who is responsibility for quality? who approves new courses and academic developments? who allocates the key resources? who appoints academic staff? In tight federal structures, questions relating to whether there would be one supervening body and one Senate also would arise. What for example, would be the role of the campuses and their management structures? would there be top slicing to meet central 'services' or charging out? can scope be built in for 'local' initiatives and how do successful collaboratives avoid the risk of top heavy, slow administration? My observation, as recorded, was that the workshop was approached with 'polite participation' but that it did not come across as one where there was collective engagement with the agenda.

The models of collaborative formations in the global context were discussed as were UK and regional models, and the question of 'T's position within them. This was with the knowledge that in the afternoon a separate and distinct meeting of the Policy Group would be considering the re-tabled Strategy Paper from the May meeting that had not been given more than a tèsory consideration in the planning day. In this Strategy Paper there was a celebration of 'T' success and achievement to date but also clear suggestions about the way forward that the Chair wished to secure. The fact of this paper may have acted as an inhibitor to the openness of discussions in the morning and especially as one model outlined was to consider what 'T' as a federal model might look like. It is therefore understandable that there was potential for confusion and that a 'head of steam' was gathering with regard to discussing certain types of formal structures. Not everyone embraced these and distinctive views amongst individual members were emerging and there was a need for all voices needed to be heard.
3.5 POSITIONING 'T' IN THE HE SECTOR AND THE REGIONAL SETTING

A first public opportunity and key event involving Vice Chancellors and peers in the sector (other than within 'T'), took place in October 2000. The Chair of 'T' was invited to give a presentation about its evolution and aspirations at the Higher Education South East (HESE) Vice Chancellors' Forum. HESE was formed at about the same time as 'T' in April 1999 and was physically located within the South East England Development Agency's offices (SEEDA). This meeting was convened at the University of Sussex and was one of its earliest with the collective of Vice Chancellors from the south east region. For 'T' it was a platform to test the robustness of the case for collaborative management and gave an opportunity to both inform and learn about the regional agenda. It was underpinned, however, by a competition-collaboration tension.

At the event there were two CEO members of the 'T' Policy Group in the audience, as full members of HESE, as well as the Vice Chancellor's of three validating universities of 'T' partners. This combined with the fact that the Chair was viewed as somewhat of an 'outsider' (as he was now CEO of an HEI in the London region) resulted in some testing questioning about why there had been a need to form 'T' in the first place. The nearest University to Coundon Institute and the validator of Priory Institute's degrees went as far as saying that there seemed to be 'a degree of paranoia in 'T' and that he would want to send out the message as a response to the presentation given by the Chair of 'why not trust the universities?'.

There followed a somewhat bizarre scenario where each validating University of the 'T' partners in attendance, appeared to be staking their claim to being part of 'T' by default, through their validation relationships and thus legitimising the existence of 'T' as a good idea. It was unclear as to how partisan or neutral the two 'T' CEOs in the audience were. The first had still only relatively recently inherited 'T' when moving into the role of CEO at Coundon, and the CEO at Earlsdon had been the last member to join, in August 2000, but had yet to attend his first 'T' meeting. I noted in my field notes how complex it was to see 'T' in the context of this regional forum in action. The cross regional consortium of 'T' was being advocated for and chaired by a CEO from a London specialist HEI, while the lead institution overall for 'T' was located in the south east and was one of the two 'T' members in the audience who because of their various histories were a bit circumspect.
The presentation and question and answer session fielded by the Chair of 'T' had been bullish and set out clearly the background and rationale of 'T'. It traced the HE Policy context from 1997 when the Government White Paper on the regions was circulated “presaging a shift in perceptions about institutional positioning and relationships.” He continued, discussing the reshaping of HEFCE along regional lines, the industry relationships and particularly the importance of the creative industries to the UK economy as well as establishing catchments for widening participation and FE/HE relationships. In addition, both informing and challenging the HESE Vice Chancellors and heads of HEIs in the region, the Chair of 'T' made the following comment:

among the smaller players fears grew about regional university hegemonies. It is interesting, is it not, that this group is still described as a Vice Chancellor's Forum?

The fact that a key role could be played by the specialist colleges in helping shape perspectives on the nature of the creative industries, and especially in the light of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport's mapping document was made clear, as well as the potential role in the sustainable regeneration of national and regional economies. The Chair also contextualised 'T' against the backdrop of the growing interest in alternative forms of strategic alliance short of merger as the sector searched for suitable platforms from which to address emergent Regional Development Agencies, HEFCE and the cultural and creative industries. This together, with the unfolding HEFCE/UniversitiesUK/SCOP dialogue about what was meant by diversity and the developing debate within HEFCE's Strategy Group about the future shape and nature of UK Higher Education provision made it clear how much could be achieved through collaboration.

A clear statement was made about the common platform of 'T' by the Chair:

…it was and remains a dedication to the pre-eminence of the small specialist centre as a shaper of subject and ambassador for the discipline. To put it another way, our gathering was predicated on the shared belief that not only does the existence of the monotechnic confirm the presence of HE diversity, but that we share a common cause in the protection of, and the enhancement of, our subjects, beyond the wheal of university multi-faculty dynamics.

Pertinent points were also made about the distinction between the role and purpose of 'T' and HESE. 'T' was conceptualised as a consortium and not as a network predominantly for sharing concerns. He drew the point of distinction between 'T' and HESE, noting that:
...a consortium actually does things. Ultimately this is likely to involve give and take in pursuit of common goals...These issues will touch any construct of alliance and is fundamental to any formal, agreement struck between partners. The retention of corporate independence remains a 'sine qua non' of 'T'. It was among the more sensitive of matters in the shaping of our arrangement, and is still very much at the front of our minds.

Finally, after embellishing on the construct and the consolidation of 'T' through its gains in terms of projects and interest groups the Chair of 'T' spoke about its future. This was both in terms of having reached an interesting moment in history and to the Developing Collaborative Management Skills Project as a test-bed for future direction. The Chair referred to the growth in membership, the changes in faces around the table as a result of career moves and the continuing shifts in the HE sector as repositioning was unfolding. Professor Pope also raised the issue that 'T' had encountered of exclusivity or inclusivity:

we are not a club and yet some colleagues are talking of limiting membership and laying down defences against certain additions. Is this some sign of success in the venture?

Again, for the internal audience of 'T' as much as external audiences in the sector, the Chair referred to the fact of 'T' being viewed as a 'cash cow'.

...cynics in new membership perceive our model as primarily one of a bidding mechanism. This is not so!

The Chair continued saying that the question at the end of the day would be whether 'T':

...would find a unique consortium arrangement or would it find that the more traditional models such as Wisconsin in the US or even the University of London model in the UK be the driving precedent.

An unequivocal statement was made that:-

... if we are to work together even more closely we will need to surrender some of our precious independence

With regard to the pivotal role of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project, its part in helping Chief Executives of member institutions to learn better how to work collaboratively and manage collaborations was detailed and the findings of the various models of collaboration in the US, Europe and the UK:

We have considered each on merit, we have held a seminar to examine where on a scale of loose network to formal merger we might reside, facilitated by and through the Association of Commonwealth Universities, and we have employed the Judge Institute of Management Studies at Cambridge University to map institutional perspectives and attitudes and the Business School at CENTRIM, University of Brighton to evaluate appropriate
infrastructure. In two weeks time we are to have our first residential to discuss findings so far and to debate the future.

Following the presentation at HESE the text of the presentation was circulated to the rest of the Policy Group, for information. Against a heading called ‘Challenges’, the Chair put a note to the effect that colleagues would appreciate that he developed matters hypothetically:

I talked of academic cohesion, the importance of shared commitment at CEO level, differing institutional perspectives, cultural diversity and the fact that we are not just a bidding consortium (a cyclical perspective) but a well-found alliance built upon common goals.

The representation of ‘T’ on an external platform, had thus resulted in a careful statement about the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project and how it interfaced with the evolution and aspirations of ‘T’. It was a clear statement to others, but within ‘T’ the project still seemed to have an air of mystery about it.

3.6 COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT & INTERNAL RIPPLES: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN ALL DOESN’T GO TO PLAN?

Very soon after the HESE Forum an internal episode occurred in relation to the HEFCE Annual Student Numbers bidding round within ‘T’. This again indicated the lack of clarity in its role and purpose for its membership. HEFCE’s annual invitation for institutions to bid for additional institutional numbers against a prospectus places institutions in an archetypal competitive bidding situation within each region that does not immediately sit easily with the collaborative context. However, the potential to avoid duplication and thus strengthen the case for collaboration, using it as a lever to secure resources is a paradox of ‘potential rivals winning through collaboration’.

A routine call from the Chair of ‘T’ for sharing partner institutional intentions took place as part of the annual cycle of ‘T’ business. This recognised for the first time that any proposals for ‘T’ joint bidding would be problematic in terms of crossing institutional boundaries, but acknowledged that foundation degrees could test these boundaries. As with the previous years, it was agreed that the Policy Group was a useful forum to rehearse partner proposals for their total ASN bids, and in turn collectively the Policy Group could endorse and lend their support to individual bids through the mechanism of ‘T’.

Since September 1999, when the first letter of endorsement for ‘T’ partner ASN bids had been sent to HEFCE, three new partners had joined the consortium. In October
2000 Earlsdon Institute had only been a member for some 2 months. When the draft letter, mapping all ASN bids was circulated, a Senior Management team member of Earlsdon sent a letter to the 'T' Office, couched in quite strong terms and indicating concerns about a partner institution's bid, which they believed did not meet HEFCE priorities, and one that they regarded as not meriting such a large bid for numbers. Their reasons included that this partner institution did not have the highest quality rating within the partnership, so, as they perceived it, they should not be supportive in their bidding for such large numbers.

The issues here related to the distinction between what 'T' was or was perceived to be and its interface with individual institutional strategies. When 'T' had first engaged in endorsing partner ASN bids, it was a step on a long ladder of collaboration, and not the top rung which was sometimes referred to at Policy Group in terms of commitment to and joint academic planning, with 'T' acting as some form of supra organisation. The first step toward this aspiration involved partners sharing their institutional strategies so that in theory, wherever possible duplication of provision could be avoided, or at least discussed, and weight could be lent to regional ASN bidding. The bigger picture that 'T' was hoping to achieve related to all the partner institution's commitment to the subject, to the values of 'T' and the ongoing commitment to conserving the integrities of member institutions.

However, the interpretation manifested by Earlsdon Institute in relation to 'T' activity in respect of ASNs was one of believing 'T' to be involved in joint academic planning and with the collective power to support or sanction individual institutional strategies. This played out practically as Earlsdon believing that through 'T' they could not support a partner institution whose QAA scores were less than theirs, whose bid was far less modest than theirs and who they believed did not satisfy HEFCE priorities for ASNs.

The concerns as articulated by the new member of 'T' were that:

'T' is in real danger of losing credibility with HEFCE if we all support a bid which does not address their stated priorities throughout. If a bid (or part of it) is being submitted under the 'high quality' banner, then 'T' as a whole should agree who is best placed to achieve this.

Has this bid has been discussed and agreed in its entirety by all other 'T' members?
We are happy to support those parts of the bid which are clearly matched against the HEFCE priorities, but not the parts which fail to do so.

The email reply by the Chair of the Policy Group was a considered response, but equally forthright. The Chair contextualised his reply in the light of the presentation that he had just given at the HESE VC’s Forum and how he had stressed amongst other things ‘T’s shared beliefs, the harmonious relationship based on the common cause of the subject and the ongoing commitment to conserving the integrities of member institutions. He referred:

... especially to the construct that whilst we share our academic plans we do not (as yet) plan jointly. One endemic useful aspect of ‘T’ is the weight it can lend to regional ASN bidding. This weight proved significant last year in the ASN round and as you know was an essential component in our success in Widening Participation.

The Chair noted that the growth in creative arts student numbers in the ‘T’ catchment should always be a matter for collaboration where and whenever the growth occurred and he pressed his reasoning for lending support to member institutions. The balance of the relationship with HEFCE was clearly addressed:

In my view it would be quite improper for ‘T’ to pay an interventionist role in individual partners’ Strategic Plans. To press for this is the kind of thing that will lead to fracture and consequent loss of credibility with HEFCE.

In the event, the suggestion was that if the particular institution felt that strongly, it should be discussed at the table at a Policy Group meeting. The Chair cautioned that it might be better for the meeting after next, as there would be HEFCE representation at the meeting in November 2000, which would also be the first one for the institution who had raised this matter and the Policy Group meeting was to immediately precede a Developing Collaborative Management Skills project residential workshop.

3.7 WORKSHOP 2: THE FIRST 'DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT SKILLS' RESIDENTIAL PRECEDED BY HEFCE ATTENDANCE AT A POLICY GROUP MEETING

By November 2000, there had been a four month gap since the Policy Group had met together. The Chair of ‘T’ had now taken up post at his new institution (Holyhead Institute), and the CEO of Earlsdon Institute would be formally sitting around the Policy Group table for the first time. The Developing Collaborative Management Skills Project had been in progress for six months and project milestones included not just further collection of data on models of collaboration, but the putting in place of future milestones for the cultural mapping stage and staff development programme for the CEOs. The aim was for them to collectively work through mapping their own
individual partner institutional cultures and from there to start the process of formally defining a 'collaborative' culture. This would be undertaken against the backdrop of an increasing recognition of and interest in the business of 'T' by the sector as a whole.

Prior to the commencement of the residential, but at the same venue the 'T' Policy Group met to have its 12th Policy Group meeting. Although it was hoped that there would be full attendance at the most senior level by each institution, in the event there was substitution for the CEO by Sunnybank Institute. This meant that there still had not been a meeting of all seven Chief Executive Officers who now formally constituted the Policy Group.

The operational business of 'T' required a presentation by a Senior Officer from HEFCE in relation to a Joint Costing & Pricing Strategy submission that 'T' had submitted. At the same meeting the Regional Consultant for the South East was also present following an invitation from the Policy Group to attend and discuss the progress of 'T' from HEFCE's perspective. This was the first time that HEFCE Officers had visited a Policy Group and was not a regular occurrence.

The HEFCE perspective as presented to the Policy Group meeting was positive. The Regional Consultant spoke about how gratifying it had been to see that so many individual funding initiative groups within the Funding Council had interacted with 'T'. These included Widening Participation, Good Management Practice and HEROBAC who had all independently allocated funds to 'T' and judged it to be writing successful competitive bids as a 'going concern' and as part of a practical academic consortium. He recounted how he had been part of the initial discussions about 'T' and how the previous Chief Executive of HEFCE, Sir Brian Fender had been very keen to support the model of a consortium of small specialist colleges which had set itself the brief 'to deliver and get things done'. He spoke about how 'T' should aim to become self-sustaining once HEFCE funding under the Restructuring & Collaboration Fund came to an end and that it needed to be able to provide a strong alternative model of 'diversity', innovative thinking and technology transfer. There was also a hint that formally constituted and recognized, well established consortia who had submitted proposals for the Foundation Degree prototype programme were likely to do well in this particular competition.

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At the end of the meeting the HEFCE observers left and the start of the project element of the residential commenced. Most of the Policy Group were buoyant about the endorsement by HEFCE, but the newer members of 'T' were displaying a degree of unease and questioning whether it was normal for HEFCE to be so engaged and closely associated with the work of 'T'.

3.7.1 GETTING THE RESIDENTIAL UNDERWAY - INTRODUCTION TO THE 'ENHANCING COLLABORATION' WORKSHOP

The overnight residential workshop for the 'T' Policy Group had been preceded by interviews with each CEO and a senior member of staff at each of the individual institutions, conducted by the external consultant and CEO Workshop Project facilitator. The focus of the workshop was on 'enhancing collaboration' and was an opportunity to review the work of the consortium in the light of the recent changes of membership and personnel and in terms of mapping individual institutional cultures. The overarching task was to derive a collaborative culture for 'T' and facilitators had been commissioned who had a background in working with CEO governance issues.

This was the first opportunity for the now fully constituted consortium and all its seven institutions to be represented, although at the last minute it had been agreed that substitution be allowed for Sunnybank Institute as the CEO was unable to attend. Also in attendance was a Senior Colleague from Bryanstone who had requested that she be allowed to attend as part of her professional development.

The agenda for the residential was as follows:-

TABLE 20: AGENDA FOR CEO RESIDENTIAL WORKSHOP AT GOODWOOD ON 'ENHANCING COLLABORATION'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day and Time</th>
<th>'T' Histories</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday Session 1:</td>
<td>'T' Histories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday Session 2:</td>
<td>Discussion focus during and after dinner:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The role of the College Principal/Chief Executive</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The changing environment for Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday Session 3</td>
<td>Cultures – differences and commonalities</td>
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<td>Friday Session 4</td>
<td>Strategies and Collaboration</td>
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<td>Friday Session 5</td>
<td>Leading Collaboration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday Session 6</td>
<td>Developing the 'Developing Collaborative Management Skills' Project</td>
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The first session was focused on 'T' histories because there were currently both new individuals and institutions involved in 'T', and it was a good opportunity to review each individual's and institution's involvement with the consortium. The phrase
'founding fathers' was often used as the starting place for recounting individual CEO history of their involvement in 'T' and this in itself represented a division. The objective of the first session was to share knowledge and understanding both of the founding rationale of 'T' as well as the way that this had evolved to include new members. By looking chronologically at 'T's formation and from individual perspectives, a number of general observations could be made about necessary condition for successful collaboration in its early stages.

The discussions captured at the workshop ranged from describing the emergent regional agendas, embracing diversity and questioning the effectiveness of mergers through to how they created an opportunity for 'T' collaborative arrangements, the interpersonal conditions of collaboration and individuals' personal feelings toward it. Some participants stated that 'T' itself was a competitive entity and that there was a clear orientation toward institutional advantage. Others countered that the potentially hostile environment of the sector had to be taken into account. The perspectives of the three new members of 'T' were also set out with the sessions taking the practical steps of reinforcing that successful collaboration needs to be built not only on a clear strategic rationale, but also on strong mutual understanding, trust and respect between participants. This set the scene for a more comprehensive approach the following day.

In the early morning session the following day, collaboration was considered in a metaphorical way, by playing a game to create imaginary creatures that modeled the characteristics of 'T'. Three teams worked to model a creature in the likeness of 'T' and to weave a story around it. The aim was to ease the way for partners to develop a shared and legitimate mindset that could co-exist happily alongside the one that prevailed in their own institution and that would also allow everyone to be simply guided in everyday decision making at all levels. In presenting the outcomes and in discussion on the metaphoric meanings implied by the models certain themes emerged, that can be summarised as:-

- The theme of visible presence, that for now was overt in style but could mature to display greater elegance and gravitas
- The theme of a core that was intangible, but was an essential provider of the right form of energy
- The theme of a creative tension that by definition at present was not comfortable and was constantly being fed by a form of evolution and/or dialogue
This session, as a practical and visual method of modeling was participated in fully by the Policy Group and appeared to achieve the objective of metaphor helping one to see one thing in terms of another. Learning took place on how metaphors could often assist in re-conceptualising a problem or in attempting to make sense of a new set of circumstances or to integrate a new discovery. In this sense, they could be seen both as a device used in spoken communication as well as simultaneously a framework to think in.

3.7.2 CULTURES – DIFFERENCES AND COMMONALITIES

This second session of the workshop was designed to build upon an understanding and respect for individual/institutional differences as well as a sense of shared purpose or common values.

From the interviews conducted with the CEO and a senior manager from each institution as part of the pre-planning session key cultural commonalities and differences between members of the consortium were mapped based on these conversations. The project facilitator reported on these findings as an introduction to the session. He noted that culture was an important dimension within any collaborative venture for two reasons:

- Superficial similarities can easily mask differences of history, tradition and belief that subsequently make communication and collaboration between partners problematic.
- As there are few sanctions that members can use in relation to each other, a collaborative venture is by definition a voluntary association in which development can only be achieved on the basis of mutual consent. In this respect it is a shared idea or vision that holds ‘T’ together; it is this idea along with subsequent shared experiences - of success, failure, and problem solving - that is the basis of a nascent ‘T’ culture.

He recounted to the Group how over the last twenty years participant institutions had experienced significant change in the external environment and what was a relatively stable and benign environment had, over time, become both much more demanding and more hostile. As a key bridge between the external environment and the internal organisation, all the CEOs had sought to drive through major internal organisational change processes in an attempt to survive in the face of this more demanding external environment. These changes had also provided the spur to the formation of
'T' as an exploration of novel inter-organisational arrangement. It also offered a means of matching organisational capabilities to the environment.

The internal integration that had occurred by the individual members of the Policy Group had varied. All the CEOs of 'T' in different ways and contexts had been preoccupied with changing the structure and cultures of their individual institutions in order to survive in the more demanding and hostile environment. For several of them this meant prolonged and difficult struggles with entrenched interest groups within their institutions. The description of 'Artist CEOs' could be ascribed to some CEOs although all strongly believed in the importance and added legitimacy of academic leadership of specialist institutions.

The common theme was also identified across member institutions of a concern to move from autonomous administrative functions to a more 'service' oriented culture which contributes to the core task of the institution. In practice, in a number of institutions, this required the centralisation of leadership in the figure of the CEO which has only been achieved after a struggle with established functional or academic 'fiefdoms'. At the same time most CEOs have rationalised the academic structure in order to simplify, de-layer, and create incentives for cross-disciplinary working.

Mutual issues in relation to staffing across the partnership institutions were also prevalent. The specialist colleges are noted as being unusual in the high ratio of sessional to full time staff that they use for teaching. Similarly, for staff at all levels the changes in the environment have been experienced as a change from a rather comfortable, inward looking focus under local authority funding, to the much more pressured context of HE funding. Symbols of this change include the change within some institutions from established to short-term contracts with all the uncertainty that this implies for individuals. Similarly, moves to performance related pay for some HEIs have signalled multiple performance criteria to which institutions are now subject. The facilitator had found it interesting to note that ambivalence appeared to characterise staffs' responses to these changes. On the one hand, the changes were felt as personally empowering and enabling. On the other hand, the changes themselves could be experienced as personally disturbing and threatening to the 'psychological contract' between individual and institution.
Despite a protracted period of organisational uncertainty, relative resource scarcity and constant change, what staff at institutions shared was a preoccupation with the quality of student provision and a concern to maintain an environment that supports the full development of student capabilities.

It was agreed that there was an emergent logic for collaboration that it was 'small, specialist and vulnerable' (Roberts and Dumas, 2001). There were many commonalities between participating institutions in terms of their external environment and patterns of internal organisational changes and this was not surprising. What all the 'T' institutions shared directly was a common funding source and common performance appraisal process for both quality and research. They also shared the fact that, relative to others, they were all small and suffered the resource scarcity and costs that this would imply. At the same time they all passionately believed in the importance of specialist provision, and the ways in which this met student need in a manner that they would argue would be difficult to protect in a multi-disciplinary institution.

A great deal of the early thinking and work around 'T' had been focused in the 'T' Policy Group or done by the dedicated 'T' Co-ordinator. In 2000 - 2001 there had begun to be a wider involvement of senior staff in participating institutions in relation to project work or functional interest groups.

Indicative interviews recorded by the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project facilitator in preparation for the CEO workshops had suggested a slow growth in understanding of the possibilities of 'T' in the wider audiences of each institution:

*We already had collaborative relations and anyway we thought we were better than them.*

*We couldn't understand our role in it we didn't have any ownership since we didn't have a role in building it.*

*I've no clear idea of where it's going. I don't understand the logic of it.*

The above comments indicated the importance of involvement and leadership for staff at participating institutions if they were going to be able to understand and participate in collaborative work. At the same time, where individuals had been actively involved in project or focus group work there was a growing understanding and appreciation of the value of 'T':

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the only way we are going to survive is if we engage more with participation and collaboration. It’s not desperate but times are getting tougher with the funding councils, and central government initiatives arrive every few months. We need to be more flexible.

I can see the benefits now. I enjoy working with colleagues, it’s interesting to learn what other institutions are doing, the people are intelligent. We all have different structures. It’s an opportunity to say 'I've got this problem what do you do about it' - you've an excuse to ask.

3.7.3 THE OUTCOMES OF THE FIRST 'DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT SKILLS' RESIDENTIAL

At the end of the first project residential an agreed 'strategic logic of 'T' had emerged and many of the discussions on the current strategic rationale of the consortium had been aired collectively and captured. Part of this rationale concerned the potential for building the external profile of members and giving a stronger voice with which to represent members’ interests and concerns.

At both CEO and senior manager levels 'T' has already proved itself to be an important vehicle for learning about significant change in the external environment. It also acted as a vehicle for learning between staff of participating institutions mitigating some of the effects of relative smallness and acting as a staff development mechanism. External demands seemed to be more readily and thoroughly met as a member of 'T' than in isolation and 'T' had already been very successful in bidding for project focused resources. Interest groups had started to identify means of generating resource savings e.g. through shared provision. Finally some initial work had been done of course development in relation to Foundation degrees.

In Figure 10 below are some of the potential strategic choices that at this point appeared on the horizon for 'T'. The interviews suggested that these future potentials should not be pursued at the expense of realising the core logic of the collaboration that has already been started and where there is a clear need for internal leadership from the CEOs if the potential for collaboration were to be firmly embedded within their respective organisations.
Figure 11 below compares the different dimensions of the strategic rationale of 'T' with some of the possible expectations of HEFCE. Some of the gains of collaboration are more easily quantified than others and hence more visible. An important part of the external leadership of 'T' was to ensure that key stakeholders have a clear perception of the benefits that could be realised through collaboration.

4.1 WORKSHOP 3: 'LEADING COLLABORATION - THE SECOND RESIDENTIAL
'DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT SKILLS' WORKSHOP

April 2001 commenced with the second CEO workshop under the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. A period of five months had elapsed since the first residential workshop 'Enhancing Collaboration'. This residential workshop entitled 'Leading Collaboration' was similarly held at Goodwood and was facilitated, as was the first, by the Judge Institute of Management Studies at Cambridge. Six out of the seven Chief Executive Officers were in attendance, the absence of the seventh being due to an unforeseeable domestic occurrence.

The first CEO residential workshop was reviewed as part of the introductory sessions and a number of general observations were made on the basis of views expressed during the session. These were summarised by the facilitator of the sessions as follows (Roberts 2001: 3):

- The first workshop seems to have had the effect both of calming a number of anxieties about the ability of 'T' to survive changes in both personnel and participating institutions, and of creating a more relaxed sense of shared endeavour between participants.
One can speculate that the first workshop allowed the group to move from being a collection of individuals to being a group to which individuals felt they belonged.

This allowed the second workshop to start from a position of some confidence and for participants to begin to voice stronger and possibly more realistic demands upon each other and 'T'.

There was a perception that 'T' had moved on during the intervening period and was no longer merely in the minds of the CEOs.

Within participating institutions with the creation of the Development & Operations Group and the beginnings of collaborative work around core academic areas, there was now more widespread involvement and ownership of 'T'. The implication is that there is now a pressure from below for the members of the policy group to give clear leadership to 'T' within their own institutions.

There were a number of comments that suggested that the external environment is also changing, possibly in a way that was potentially hostile to small specialist institutions. There are also important changes to the leadership of HEFCE. 'T' has met its early objectives but is also coming near the end of its seed funding. These changes have created a felt need for greater clarity as to the future direction and development of 'T'.

Individual comments during the session included one CEO who had come later to 'T' and who indicated that the first workshop had allowed him to feel part of 'T', something that had not been the case up until that point. An immediate concern was that he was unable to attend the next Policy Group meeting at the end of April and he did not want decisions to be taken in which he had not had an involvement. A second CEO commented that the first workshop had given him a greater understanding of what collaboration meant and that it had allowed the Policy Group to move to a different stage. His concern was that much of the energy that had been generated through the first meeting had subsequently dissolved, in part because the Policy Group had hardly met as a group in the intervening period. The question that was on his mind was about the future of 'T' – where next?

A third CEO recalled his previous anxiety about whether 'T' would be able to absorb two new members, and the way in which this had been sort of hanging in the air, but settled in the course of the first residential workshop. He had found the modeling of 'T' very useful and the images of the models had endured. He felt that 'T' now had a presence in the wider HE community and a gathering momentum within participating institutions. In his opinion, 'T' now had a life beyond the Policy Group.

A fourth CEO perspective reviewing the first workshop offered a useful diagnosis of the nature of collaboration. He felt that 'T' was at an important watershed.
funding was coming near its end and with the wisdom of hindsight from the perspective of his own institution he would not have chosen to do some of the projects 'T' had engaged in. He felt that it was important for there to be greater clarity as to what the 'T' collaboration was for, and for 'T' to be more proactive in setting its own agenda as well as responding to external initiatives. He believed that it was important for small institutions to use energy selectively and carefully, and that such concerns should inform their thinking about the future of 'T'.

Another CEO voiced his view that the first meeting had moved 'T' from being a defensive exercise to something more creative and positive. He also felt that the modeling of 'T' and the subsequent analysis had been the most helpful part of the first workshop. His current concerns focused on external changes and a degree of nervousness that he now felt about the sustainability of a group of small institutions in the current climate. He felt that 'T' could easily be driven back into a defensive position by the policy context.

The final CEO perspective was given by someone who had been unable to attend the first residential workshop. He spoke about what had led his institution to join 'T' and he still felt worried by a defensive definition of 'T' although his institution had itself been the target of predatory institutions. Instead, it was the positive potential of academic and artistic collaboration that had made membership of 'T' attractive to him; the potential for access to skills related to design, broadcast, costume, dance, and transmission.

Other views were expressed about the complexities of collaboration given the differences that needed to be accommodated. It was felt that collaboration could only be an iterative process. Below the Policy Group 'T' was beginning to cohere and this had important implications for communication between different groups and levels of 'T'.

The second session of the day was built around the Policy Group playing a computer based exercise called 'Communication is the Key'. This aimed to show that effective collaboration required both teams (who had similar tasks) to plan a route around a number of locations in which they each took account of the other's needs.

The key learning objectives of the exercise included the fact that
• It was vital to check out with others whether you are working to the same objectives. Typically we simply assume that our partial perspective is shared by everyone and is not partial. In the short term, we simply get on with the work but, over time, the effectiveness of what we are doing diminishes as differences of which we and others are unaware begin to have cumulative effects. The only successful remedy is to check out our understanding of the others' objectives and to inform them of our own. Then there is a chance that everyone is playing in the same or at least a consonant game.

• It was vital to be able to take the other's position in order to be able to understand the effects of our own actions on their interests. If we do not gain an accurate knowledge of their interests and objectives then the effectiveness of any collaboration will quickly deteriorate.

• Failures of communication typically arise from a lack of understanding but they generate frustration that can easily be blamed on the other rather than on a failure to manage the communication process. Explicit communication is always grounded in a set of tacit assumptions. Around any communication there is a very rich and complex process of attribution taking place - judgments about the self and our competence, judgments about the other and their motives and competence. When the other is absent and there is little opportunity to check out our assumptions, then any failure of communication readily leads to the attribution of base intentions or capabilities to the other. If the process is reciprocated it is then very easy to start a war.

• Any performance pressure - points and a time constraint in the game - tends to increase the felt urgency to get on with things and thereby miss the necessary first step of making sure there is sufficient reciprocal understanding of what each is trying to do. When communication subsequently fails these pressures only increase the frustration and the likelihood that the other will be blamed for obstructing your best efforts.


At the end of the morning each member was asked to identify three things that from their perspective would help strategic collaboration within 'T'. Table 21 below summarises the responses made on behalf of the partner institutions in terms of the wish lists, the current added value that it was perceived that 'T' brought and 3 further core 'value added aspects for the future.
### 4.2 TABLE 21: GRAPPLING WITH A STRATEGIC INTENT FOR ‘T’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘T’ Partner Institution</th>
<th>What does my institution want delivered to date?</th>
<th>What current ‘added value’ has it delivered to date?</th>
<th>What 3 core ‘value added’ aspects does it want for the future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashdown Institute</td>
<td>A mechanism for association that will allow for development of the institution</td>
<td>The ability to exploit what is timely and the collaboration concept brought to the front of the agenda. The ability to be in a position to exploit mutuality, networks, etc. Some very good opportunities for staff development. Benefits as a consequence of collaborative activity that are good plus the benefits from many of the interest / development groups</td>
<td>An association that is ‘academically led’ rather than administratively pushed (noted the difficulty of charting this) The lobby of ‘specialism’ that closely relates to politics (in itself an effective means as an outside loop to achieve desired outcomes and can be seen from the number of ‘stars’ in collective alumni) ‘T’ as an agency for the development of projects of various types and a vehicle for standards and the emergence of a ‘T’ kitemark or standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holyhead Institute</td>
<td>A defensive strategy, an introduction of a small institution into networking that is not project fixed</td>
<td>Feeling that it is a ‘good place to be’ in the current climate with the difficulties of going it alone Raising awareness of the advantages of collaboration, although not a great deal of project money gained directly. Importance of ‘T’ is to know that there is someone else out there and for the institution to be seen itself as part of an academic community Institutional priorities are research, subject enhancement and differentiation from competitors both within and from ‘T’</td>
<td>Requirement of subject at academic level Place of exchange on strategy (it maps usefully on and with colleagues in ‘T’) corresponding and giving opportunity for value added through joint academic works Institution has to make a decision to be somewhere, and it wants to be clear soon whether it should be with ‘T’. If ‘T’ is only to be a network, then ‘T’ would not be the natural choice for this institution and it would look for network partnership elsewhere. A commitment to a federal relationship would be different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coundon Institute</td>
<td>Although not party to the original decision, it would seem that ‘T’ is a vehicle for Coundon to position itself</td>
<td>Funding on projects has been useful, especially Creative Learning Futures project There had been some economic and quality benefits associated from joint purchasing It had raised the profile of Coundon and had been a source of goodwill both with colleagues and with HEFCE</td>
<td>A strategic debate with timely and achievable objectives A sustained programme of activity and some modeling of what ‘T’ will look like in 2 years time A view on academic planning – what could it look like and what could be useful as a ‘quid pro quo’ for HEFCE in order to secure funding for stage 2 of ‘T’s life Training of research students with a university department, e.g. Brighton, Surrey, OU, Sussex To progress the idea of practice based doctorates Professional development in the creative industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnybank Institute</td>
<td>‘T’ was sold on the basis as a match of complementarity and skills which could be a vehicle for protecting the institutions’ independence and also give access to collective funding of initiatives. This would enable representation of the diversity of offer within the creative industries.</td>
<td>Musicians find it difficult to fit, and have tended to date to be somewhat insular, ‘T’ has brought a breadth of complementary disciplines Collective Funded initiatives have helped combat the ‘smallness’ and capacity issue to bid Protectionism – helps preserve the institutional independence HEFCE doesn’t understand Sunnybank’s desire for membership of ‘T’</td>
<td>Interaction with various aspects of art &amp; design, which as a music monotechnic are not available, eg live performance in a variety of media, film, broadcast A larger local and regional definition, not confined to a particular feature and community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priory Institute</td>
<td>Protection as a small institution which has a romantic notion of a &quot;small and perfectly formed&quot; art school Distance from neighbouring institutions who were looking in a predatory fashion</td>
<td>The greater opportunities for bi-lateral networking, e.g. IT Managers Cost benefits through some joint initiatives, e.g. Legal Services, ‘Pathways’ though not necessarily from unfocused or opportunistic projects Has not been actively pursuing larger project because of the agenda of ‘small and perfectly formed’ notion</td>
<td>Complementarity – in particular for art &amp; design institutions rather than arts &amp; design A degree of context that cannot be achieved as a small institution. The idea of ‘pushing above its weight with partners’. This can be achieved in the context of ‘research’ but require a collective approach to other issues It would be good to see ‘T’ offering itself as a &quot;third way&quot; either as a developed association or not – possibly a Federation, although there are issues for this institution with regard to quality related issues, efficiency related or other imminent alternative might have to be pursued</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Greater reciprocal knowledge and understanding came through as a common theme together with a request for clarity for where 'T' was going. It was suggested by the facilitator that it would be helpful to refine or specify what different institutions wanted from 'T', to identify where institutions wanted to preserve their autonomy and where there was a commonality of interests, to exchange more information e.g. each other's strategic and operational plans and to map each other's academic offerings.

All of the above implied the need to develop further the collaborative processes of the Group so that they could be managed more effectively. These included the practicality and precepts of commitment to meeting at Policy Group as an essential condition of collaboration and a corresponding 'honesty' that would help inform and not undermine fears of fragmentation/incompatibility, and might help to generate trust between members of the policy group, which in turn might create greater confidence in 'T'.

A number of suggestions as to how the strategy of 'T' could be developed were put on the table, including the fact that 'T' strategy was 'different from' but needed to be understood in terms of the strategies of each of the individual participants, that there was a need to move 'T' from being reactive to proactive as well as clearer strategic focus that could come from identifying where 'T' has and can still 'add value' to individual institutions.

4.3 THE CONTEXT, CONTENT AND PROCESS OF 'T' STRATEGY

The next session within the 'Leading Collaboration' workshop returned to the context, content and process of 'T' Strategy. The shift in the government agenda was felt as more ferocious and the core themes identified by the Policy Group included *inter alia:* social inclusion in terms of both skill and knowledge; sustainability/employability; global presence; regionalism (including regional arts boards and regional development councils); and technology. A key related aspect of context for 'T' that was identified were the attitudes of the funding councils and especially with the change of the HEFCE Chief Executive and the proximity of government and funding council agendas. A third vital aspect of context was the cultural and creative industries where again, employability, innovation/standard setting, resources/collaboration and demonstrable knowledge were identified as four core areas of impact.
The key drivers of the changing HE context had translated into emergent trends for ‘T’ members and other HE institutions and collaborative alliances. These included a strong emphasis on the unit costs of provision, a concomitant emphasis on the efficiency of a smaller number of larger units, an embrace of the language of ‘diversity’ within single institutions and the fact that it was no longer enough to be a provider, instead you needed to be an innovator or find a niche role. It would be imperative for ‘T’ to generate visible success as a condition of investment.

4.4 TELLING THE ‘T’ STORY

The final session related to the collaborative endeavour of telling ‘the ‘T’ Story’. The facilitator posed the challenge of how to create a coherence of leadership amongst a group of peer CEOs when there is a relationship of equality between the members. Within individual institutions, the CEO has considerable power and authority in determining future directions. For ‘T’ there are few hierarchical levers that can be used to insist upon the supremacy of an individual point of view or will. Instead members of the Policy Group have to rely on discussion and dialogue to shape collective strategy. The facilitator pointed out that although this is a potentially frustrating and time consuming requirement, when handled skillfully it offers an increased chance that decisions will be challenged and tested and thereby refined more fully prior to implementation.

This session, from which a further two members of the Policy Group excused themselves, offered an opportunity to look briefly at other aspects of ‘T’ leadership and the story of ‘T’ that the Policy Group could communicate both internally and externally, as well as look at some academic views of leadership (Kets de Vries, 1993, 1994; Gardner, 1996).

The ability to tell a coherent and energising story about ‘T’ both to internal institutional audiences and to outsiders was recognised as intimately related to the quality of communication between the CEOs. The ability of the Policy Group to lead ‘T’ depended upon their being able to generate strategic clarity and consonance amongst themselves. The conclusion reached by the Group on the basis of the diagnostic framework used in the CEO workshop (of managing collaboration along the three related dimensions of content, context and process) was that the ‘T’ Policy Group was not yet ready to tell a strong story about the future of ‘T’ but that it could tell the story of the changes in the funding context that led to its creation, what has
been achieved to date, and what was being asked of staff in taking collaborative work forward. It was also stated by the facilitator that in the absence of such communication from the Policy Group, the force of others' perceptions, internally and externally will act as drivers of events.

This theme was taken up with a final discussion on how the 'T' story would be told at the forthcoming 'T' Conference to be held at Earlsdon Institute and how that required a coherent projection of support for 'T' from the CEOs of the different institutions. It was also agreed that the facilitator be asked to produce a threshold document outlining a possible process by means of which members of the Policy Group could explore the strategic options now facing 'T' and that there should be a number of meetings running parallel to the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project, that would not need to be formally reported on to HEFCE, and that they should contain discussion papers by members of the group, with an agreed timeframe.

4.5 THE NEXT ROUND OF PROCESS MEETINGS (APRIL – NOVEMBER 2001)

At the end of April, the facilitator of the project Workshops sent a follow up memo from the 'Leading Collaboration' Workshop to the Policy Group, reminding them of their talk at the meeting of 'T'. It set out an overall timeframe and summarised the position of 'T' as follows. The project facilitator referred to 'T' as:

... being at a watershed, of a changing external context, of the need for a more proactive and focused strategy, and the management of the external agenda. There was an honest exchange of views as to what different institutions had wanted and got from 'T' in terms of added value for their individual institutions [at the April Residential], and equally clear statements as to what would make membership of 'T' attractive in the future. It was in this context that those present committed to exploring whether 'T' should continue as a loose collaborative network or move to some form of stronger 'federal' structure. The time limit on such an exploratory process seemed to be around the end of 2001. These discussions can indeed be seen as a watershed for 'T' but they may also be a natural part of the evolution of collaboration. Having established itself and survived infancy, 'T' now needs to move to a more refined notion of what it wants to be.

... in my mind it is not clear what the differences are between a network and a federation. Presumably you can create stronger or weaker forms of each. A clear purpose of the discussion papers and the discussion that surround their production, would be:

- to clarify the current situation as well as the future potentials and dangers of the network and federal options.
- to identify the cost rationale and implications of the options
- to consider the motivational implications; individual, group, institutional
- to explore conflicts of interest and how these might be managed
Suggestions were made about how different members of the Policy Group could each take responsibility for the production of discussion papers and informal consultation before producing a discussion paper in advance of the Strategy Workshop. The importance was stressed of the getting the right topic for the discussion papers. Possible titles included: the changing HE/FE context, academic collaboration (with an attempt to map the different academic offerings of member institutions in order to identify areas of complementary and similar activity); functional collaboration (an exploration of the implications of a stronger federal structure for each institution's support functions), the development of 'T' administrative and organisational structures; governance implications of a move to a stronger federal structure.

Questions posed for the Policy Group included whether this was the right content and split for discussion papers, and whether some of these should be subdivided, whether the papers' focus should be only on exploring versions of a federal option or should they weigh the benefits and costs of stronger and weaker ties and how far the experience of the next layer of 'T', the 'T' Development and Operations Group and their experiences should be allowed to inform these papers.

Because of the sensitivity of these issues, a caveat was inserted into the memo that the Policy Group might need to come to an informed view of what they might wish or need to do before alerting and possibly alarming others. Whilst it was suggested that it was sensible and proper to inform Chairs of Governors and possibly HEFCE that these issues were being explored, beyond this, any wider discussions should wait until at least after the next strategic meeting. The facilitator stressed the spirit of the exercise that he took from the 'Leading Collaboration' Workshop as embracing the following:

\[
\text{HONESTY} \Rightarrow \text{to} \Rightarrow \text{TRUST} \Rightarrow \text{to} \Rightarrow \text{CONFIDENCE IN EACH OTHER, DECISIONS and 'T'}
\]

At the routine 'T' Policy Group meeting in April, the evening of June 13th/day of June 14th was confirmed as the strategy meeting for the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project and a consideration of the 'T' strategy would be taken as a non-minuted item. However, from my own notes recorded for PhD purposes, the Policy Group requested that the Chair of the Policy Group write a paper for consideration at the day in June, that was to become known as the 'Shaw Plaza' after the name of the venue.
One week prior to the Shaw Plaza meeting a six page strategy paper was sent to the Policy Group by the Chair that considered the likely future shape of HE and cited Sir David Watson's argument for the sector to seek a reduction in the range and typology of institutions if government continued to pursue through various funding pressures overarching compliance to its core agenda.

Taking the headings suggested by the facilitator of the project, the Chair set out the changing HE landscape, the logic of the 'T' strategic alliance and its achievements to date. In particular, as he put it "he chanced his arm' and posited four structural models:

- a 'T'/University federal model.
- a 'T' Federal Model.
- a Federal trading relationship (for want of a better phrase).
- a Con-Federal Model.

He posed the following conundrum: all partner institutions of 'T' are uncertain as to their eventual standing "but where do we go from here?"

The following detail added to each of the models is reproduced below in Table 22 together with some contextualising statements. It was evident from 'T' meetings that any association of 'T' needed to be placed as a genuine alternative to merger or federation with other institutions. In order to achieve this, the 'T' Policy Group needed to engage in a positive dialogue about how this might look. It was noted that all of the models would impinge on the corporate status of each partner institution and that there would be significant governance issues involved.
The paper concluded with a short paragraph summarising that 'T' now had a good opportunity to pull off something of a notable 'coup' in the history of UK higher education, and that the track record of 'T' over the previous two years, had established the efficacy of an alternative alliance model, achieved material gains in the territories of infrastructure funds and course developments, but perhaps most importantly, 'T' had presented to audiences the strength of the small specialist independent institution.

4.6 'T' MEETING AT THE SHAW PLAZA HOTEL – JUNE 13th/14th 2001

Following on from a SCOP (Standing Conference of CEOs) summer reception the overnight 'strategy' meeting, within the Policy Group was held at Shaw Plaza. The plan was for it to commence with dinner, where the project facilitator would set the scene for the following day, building on the two pieces of documentation already tabled: i.e. the memorandum from him and the paper written by the Chair at the request of the 'T' Policy Group, at their April meeting.
However, the context was affected by the fact that news was leaking and being spoken about everywhere that one of 'T's membership was in collaborative talks about merger with another large specialist institution. My first contact of the day with one of the Policy Group, concerned whether I had heard the news and what I knew about this. As various members of 'T' convened some were circumspect about the rumours and it was with a heightened sense of anticipation that members of the Policy Group sat down to dinner. Despite the fact that the domestic arrangements for the meal had been planned as 'a working dinner' in a semi-private part of the restaurant, in the event the table for the participants was located in the middle of the restaurant where no privacy was available. The meal became transformed into a mere social occasion, where work was barely alluded to, although it was felt that the significant agenda issues to be tackled were on everyone's minds and that these discussions could not really take place until a clear understanding of all members current status was garnered and understood. The work of the evening was therefore postponed to the next morning.

At the morning session, a number of CEOs expressed their need to be elsewhere immediately after lunch, as soon as they convened. Thus before the day had begun, what had been planned as an evening/day residential was quickly becoming curtailed into a slightly elongated morning.

Included in the agenda for the morning was the positive potential for academic collaboration amongst 'T' members during which the project facilitator recapped on the events prior to the meeting and set the scene for the morning's work. He recalled the discussion of the changing external context for 'T' members; particularly the pressures for change emanating from three key aspects of:-

- the environment (with government and regional agendas);
- the funding councils; and
- the cultural and creative industries.

Together these implied the need to position specialist institutions as 'innovators' rather than mere 'providers'. He also recalled the stated complementary as opposed to monolithic forms of academic collaboration, and the perceived potential for 'T' to enhance and advance the quality of specialist educational provision. There then followed a general discussion of the spirit that should inform the morning's deliberations.
Professor Moore of Earlsdon argued that 'T' should not be driven by 'gradgrind' concerns - too much emphasis on value for money should not be allowed to occlude consideration of the collaborative potentials in teaching, learning, research and quality. It would be through the commitment to, and provision of specialist education that 'T' members would build on and demonstrate their shared and common interest.

Professor Searle supported this point, arguing that in the past 'bidding' had possibly skewed the agenda away from the central 'academic drivers' and Professor Avis similarly expressed concern that discussions should not be driven by what others might want of 'T'. Professor Pope supported this arguing that 'T' had predated HEFCE's push towards collaboration, and having built reciprocal confidence through collaborative work in functional areas, it now needed a vision for future intellectual collaboration.

The project facilitator summarised the views that a shared vision amongst 'T' CEOs did not imply a monolithic form of collaboration, and that a complementarity of subject provision rather than institutional type should be the way forward.

4.6.1 DISCUSSIONS ON 'T' POSSIBILITIES

Dividing into three sub-groups to explore the different imaginations and inspirations for what future educational collaboration could achieve, the following observations were made and recorded by the project facilitator. This was despite the somewhat fraught backdrop of knowing that one institution was in active talks with another institution that had not been shared with 'T':

Group One – (Professor Searle and Professor Rhodes)

There were intrinsic interests at Ashdown that were attractive to Sunnybank (e.g. film making). Regional positioning was considered, e.g. the South West having a very strong orchestra, but no conservatoire presence in the region, and the Arts Council funding focus resting on regionalism. There were therefore opportunities for innovative and collaborative course developments. Professor Searle spoke about revenue funding being the absolute cornerstone of activity within an institution and he was particularly interested in the extent to which 'T' could engage in ASN bidding.

Professor Rhodes and Professor Searle had discussed the physical geographical distance between their institutions and the practicality of how their two institutions
could work together. A big question was how to resource the subsistence cost. An argument could be made to HEFCE in terms of cost effectiveness and for a funding stream flowing from the Arts Council. At present they were conscious that within the Arts Council two prominent (specialist institutions) appeared to represent the sector.

Group 2 - (Professor Moore, Professor Pope and Professor Close)
Professor Moore wished to pick up from where Professor Searle left off, and particularly that 'T' could be seen as a ‘centre of excellence’ (national and international) and not just as part of the sector in which the two specialist institutions who were particularly dominant, assumed the profile of specialism for the sector. Aspirations should relate to 'T' being a 'flagship' – with research and development institutions under a 'T' umbrella. It was acknowledged that all institutions have strengths and weaknesses, but that it would be useful to look at each others' institutions in terms of their strengths – it would be a good step to circulate and look at each others' RAE 5s.

Discussion then took place about investing in staff and developing a research culture; which comes first getting the students, or developing the research so that students wish to join an institution. Critical mass could be achieved through 'T' – a large peer group of academics who could build interesting research projects that no-one else could do.

Report from Group 3 (Professor Avis and Professor Diggins)
Professor Avis and Professor Diggins had considered what is feasible within 'T' in the area of academic relationships and rather than identify specific projects had instead identified some 'conditions for academic relationships' that would need to be satisfied before any developed academic collaboration could happen.

These were summarised as:-
- Mission – to see where there is mission sympathy (e.g. in research).
- Mutual confidence - choosing who you want to work with.
- Cultural synergy – compatibility.
- Academic leadership & style.

The general discussion that followed centred on the fact that two of the sub-groups had immediately moved to identify some potential bases for educational collaboration.
whilst the third had paused to consider the underlying compatibilities that would make educational collaboration possible. This provided fuel for what was an important but difficult discussion as to whether there was indeed the basis for collaboration between existing members of ‘T’.

An important set of different sensitivities emerged around the meaning of ‘academic research’. For a moment there was a distinct risk that the discussion might degenerate into an identity war around whose institution was or was not ‘academic’. In reality, however, it became clear that the different members of ‘T’ faced differential pressures around research. For Professor Diggins and Professor Avis, academic research was thought about primarily in terms of the RAE and the need to demonstrate excellence within its terms of reference. For many others, however, the RAE was seen as tangential to research activity within their institutions either because this was professionally oriented or because the RAE process could not capture this work.

The project facilitator drew the Policy Group’s attention to the ‘Goodwood 2’ residential in April and discussion of the ‘T’ context and suggested that he thought it was understood and accepted that for different members funding or regional or industry links and pressures were dominant. However, if in the current climate no-one could ignore all aspects of context, then the differences between member institutions should be seen as a source of reciprocal strength rather than a source of threat to the particular identity of different institutions. He argued that the meaning of ‘to complement’ is to make perfect or remedy each other’s deficiencies. So strengths in one area, necessarily implies weakness in others. The ‘T’ collaboration has the potential to remedy such deficiencies and hence realise such perfection.

What the frequent references to academic research in discussions of the Policy Group seemed to confuse was the shared potential and interest within ‘T’ for collaboration in which the development of practice based research provided the fuel for both the internal and external development of ‘T’.

It again became apparent that despite the time spent together members lacked a detailed knowledge of each others’ provision and hence strengths of the other member of ‘T’. It was agreed that the new Higher Education Innovation Fund proposal could start a process that would begin to remedy this dangerous ignorance of each other’s activity.
Because of the severe time constraints, it appeared that in this discussion the potential for educational collaboration had gone as far as they could. The remainder of the formal meeting was spent exploring some of the potential structures for 'T' that the Chair's paper had delineated. This was politely listened to, but the context of the foregoing discussions set the scene for a somewhat deflated atmosphere.

4.6.2 A NEW STRUCTURE FOR 'T'

The Chair of 'T' began the second session of the morning by talking about an agreed HE Innovation Fund bid to HEFCE (deadline July 20). In the light of the preceding discussions and mindful of the cautions expressed it was agreed that each institution would nominate a senior academic to represent their institution on a steering group and provide the necessary means to build reciprocal knowledge of respective educational work. The group reaffirmed their commitment to the bid. It was also agreed that the Chief Executives needed to meet again soon to do more work on the mapping of potential collaborative areas and institutional compatibility. It was agreed that Earlsdon would lead the bid, although there could be enterprise hubs centred in other institutions.

The project facilitator suggested that a new and stronger 'T' structure could serve not only collaboration but also many other purposes. Strong words such as the current fear of 'betrayal' making it difficult to invest in 'T' and the requirement for a more robust structure as well as more clearly understood rules of engagement reflected the apparent unease in some quarters and it was felt that structural responses could ease this. Additionally, in working together for the future there would need to be clear entry and exit routes for members along with clear protocols of conduct and communication amongst the partnership in order to preserve mutual trust and respect.

The Chair briefly described the options he had identified in his paper. Other CEO contributions discarded many options and the 'confederation' option came through as the favourite. This seemed to be not so much an overwhelming vote of support to pursue this avenue, but rather the only option where further exploration would be considered.

The first CEO to respond thought that linking with a University would present problems for all, but especially for Coundon Institute that already had its own degree...
awarding powers. He, therefore, favoured the Confederation Option. This was echoed by a second CEO who believed that 'T' had got to the stage where a change of status of the legal entity was very important, making it less fragile. Not all agreed on this at this time, the preferred view being that the legal entity was a different stage that should be actioned somewhere in the future when the confederation discussions had been thoroughly discussed. There was a view expressed by another CEO that the whole process was linked to signing up to a revised Heads of Agreement that would represent a summation of the process reflecting discussions that had taken place. A confederation model did not preclude moving to a more federal model at a later point and an aspiration of a number of 'T' members seeking self-validation could result in something strategically significant such as a 'University of the Arts'. As this discussion unfolded, (and as had become a constant, every time 'federal' was mentioned) you could feel the split between members of the Policy Group on this issue. The confederal model could easily serve as a vehicle for 'sharing the dream' and one CEO thought that 'T' might be as far as one third of the way toward the achievement. The dream could incorporate degree awarding powers, QAA powers as well as "the real status of research awarding powers"

At this point the 'T' Shaw Plaza away-day agenda started drifting and later appeared to become totally hijacked (another behaviour by now becoming quite common in the business of 'T') by individual institution strategic considerations. My notes record that it was an uphill struggle to focus 'collectively and collaboratively' when one institution had apparently lurched unilaterally in a strategic direction that had not been openly shared with the other members. The effect of this was to make people reconsider their understanding of 'T' and quite why they were sitting around the table sharing agendas. One CEO had already shared with me his dismay that an institution he closely aligned with in terms of size scale and their apparent intention, was now contemplating a discussion about the potential of a merger with 'another outfit'. The fact that this intent represented an individual one, that had neither been shared with the rest of the 'T' membership but now had leaked into the public domain had the effect of a considerable blow to the trust that 'T' had thought it was beginning to master between its constituent parts. The rest of the morning rather dissipated and the strategic nature of any 'T' discussion was lost.
4.7 ONGOING STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS OF GETTING TO GRIPS WITH THE PURPOSE AND FUTURE OF 'T'

Although both a Policy Group and a special 'T' strategy meeting were scheduled for July, both were cancelled because of pressure of commitments and it was not until the end of September, some three months after the Shaw Plaza meeting that the Policy Group met again. The Chair of 'T' had prepared a written report and update which was upbeat and referred to 'T' "motoring". It exhorted that expectations of 'T' were high in the sector and that it was now a fact that its profiles were:

*positively fixed..... wherever we go there is a well-held perception of 'T' and its activities. There can be little doubt that HEFCE thinks highly of us, and that conversations within the sector when placed in the context of 'T', helps 'open doors'.*

The second paragraph of the report referred to an approach that had been made to the Chair by an external consultancy to:

*Pick the Chair's brains about 'T' as a way of further informing and augmenting that organisation's current championship of strategic alliances and collaborational models.*

This, combined with a recent invitation to address another collective of higher education institutions about the 'T' alliance and collaborative modelling, and the acceptance of the invitation by the CEO of HEFCE to address the 'T' Annual Conference the following April were taken as evidence of enthusiasm for 'T' in the sector. A recent report from the UniversitiesUK LongerTerm Strategy Group on "Patterns of Higher Education Institutions in the UK" (2001) had received much publicity, and the SCOP Council of Management had considered it in some detail the previous week. The Funding Council was also at a point where it was wishing to conduct an evaluation of collaborative activity funded under the Restructuring and Collaboration Fund and had appointed an auditor for the 'T' project as a case exemplar.

The preoccupation in September 2001 was thus the high visibility agenda that 'T' was creating and the gap that was emerging in terms of external expectation and the internal pressures for clarification of purpose and mission. The latter appeared to be a 'constant' of collaborative management with the purpose and strategic intent of 'T' being forever revisited, constantly shifting and only crudely captured – and in a way that never quite resolved that it need not be revisited again for some time.

The September 'T' meeting was a discrete 'Strategy Meeting', one that was separate
and distinct from the normal 'T' Policy Group meetings, and one where it had been agreed that it would not be reported to HEFCE as part of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. The agenda focused on setting the context and revisiting again 'T's mission as well as mapping future territory. In preparation for the meeting the Chair had tabled a strategy paper reflecting on the eighteen month period where partners had been contemplating how to move forward as an organisation. As usual it linked with the last meeting and set out in some detail a strategic way forward, with a potential model. It commenced as follows:-

For the best part of 18 months 'T' members have been contemplating how we might move forward as an organisation.

Meanwhile the 'T' agenda has grown, projects have proliferated, further successful bids to HEFCE have been made and the number of 'T' specific employees has now grown to 7. In the last 18 months 'T' has turned-over in excess of £1.5 m. Over time we have been knitted together through a variety of devices. The latest of these being the first stage introduction of an information infrastructure (video conferencing).

The current state of the HE environment was sketched out and a mapping of where 'T' had got to compared with the aspirations and milestones set out in the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project:

Thus far, members have been hesitant about further formalisation, but the picture being drawn of the sector from various quarters and the growing impetus for federal arrangements suggests to a number of us that we need to make a next move, seize the initiative or get swept along in the slipstream.

One of our members is already looking formally at strategic options and I believe it essential that one of these should be that of 'T' itself. In the interests of good colleagueship and the investment so far made in 'T' we owe him that option.

Each of our member organisations holds a significant and particular position in the creative arts education field. Each is well-found in terms of subject, scholarship and sector profile and each enjoys significant presence in its subject domains. Our missions are congruent and our offer complementary.

From this point the reminder about a (con)-federal proposition was made and the reasons crafted to support it. These included the precepts on which it should be founded, i.e. a retained institutional integrity, a retained corporate standing with governing bodies and CEOs and a retained financial independence.

The gains to be made through federalisation were also developed. Specifically these included those of improved 'critical mass' and leverage, a regional creative arts HE hegemony, an improved marketing and market research profile at home and abroad,
consolidation of a 'T' brand by formal association with institutional brands and the opportunity to reduce fixed and occasional cost overheads.

Also, in preparation for this meeting a table of proposed activity was suggested, including revisiting the 'T' mission, reshaping the Heads of Agreement to include joint planning, consideration of institutional integrity issues and the legal implications of a confederal model, the potential for change of 'T' legal status, together with the requirement of engaging governors in the unfolding strategy and translate these into action by deciding set dates by which target achievements in each of these goals can be measured.

There was now a palpable sense of urgency on the part of some and a palpable slowing down on the part of other members. One of the points of distinction about this meeting was that it was without the external project facilitator, as the Policy Group felt that they could handle this particular agenda well themselves, and although aligned to the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project, it had now become strategic business of 'T' not to be recorded for the project purposes.

The first agenda item of 'setting the context' involved an in-depth consideration of the distinction between 'confederation' ‘federation' and ‘consortium' with dictionary definitions being pursued (this despite the fact that in June at the Shaw Plaza, agreement had been reached, in principle about the confederal model). Additionally the six out of seven members of the Policy Group present, gave a summary of their institutional positions in response to papers. These, together with some of the matters that arose in discussion can be summarised as follows:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 23: SUMMARIES OF INSTITUTIONAL POSITIONS AND RESPONSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INSTITUTION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashdown Institute</td>
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© Bethan O'Neill: 2007
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bryanstone Institute</td>
<td>Associations need to develop a life of their own and the only ones that survive are those that have a legal identity. The key challenge for 'T' is 'how do we work together as a whole' and whether there is an imaginative way through. In a management sense 'T' is not about a merger, or a takeover, but it has a sense of 'something else' and it is important to work that through. There is the beginnings of a group who seemed to want to move forward in the future and some who couldn't sign up to it at the moment. Is it possible to develop a new structure that would allow some divergency. A big institutional issue for some if the metropolitan institutions and the London agenda. It remains important to define 'T'; future and shape what it would look like as a unique organisation.</td>
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<td>Coundon Institute</td>
<td>Coundon is happy to engage in discussions, but doesn't want to be shackled. It would be more comfortable if things were to move at a slower pace. 'T' worked and has been productive in the protection it afforded to predation, but the impetus for decision making was still in response to HEFCE. Coundon is interested in strategic alliances within 'T' and both Coundon and Earlsdon had been discussing empathetic relationships in the areas of international recruitment, research and these continued to be sympathetic to 'T'. However, discussions and the work going on within 'T' was not felt to be sufficient for it to take on a life of its own, and if, for example 'T'; moved forward to be a University of Creative Arts, this set of relationships would not necessarily be the one that Coundon would wish to be in. Notwithstanding this, Coundon is committed to fighting the specialist corner, although has a resistance to bonding more formally contractually and legally at the moment. There are reservations about the 'T' strategy paper and Coundon wishes to retain its flexibility. There are areas of mutual interest with regard to regionalism in the south east. However, whilst not wanted to damage relationships within 'T' if Coundon needed to be in the right position in relation to collaboration, it would not necessarily be as part of 'T'.</td>
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<td>Earlsdon Institute</td>
<td>Earlsdon saw no immediate problem with the status quo and could see an institutional future within 'T' as it is now. He agreed with Coundon that it could be important to relaunch/strengthen 'T'; and pick up or invite an eights partner to join the Consortium.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holyhead Institute</td>
<td>The issues of groupings and relationships of a particular institutions was noted. Holyhead was already in 'T' when Professor Pope joined as CEO and one of his thrusts was to ensure that a performing arts institution could fit within 'T'. An important opportunity within 'T' can be demonstrated by the HEIF bid and the potential to bond through scholarship. Other key elements from Holyhead's perspective included: The position of the Drama School in the sector HEI agenda The Unique opportunity that 'T' presented for leaders of the partner specialist institutions The strong relationship through 'subject' – commonality of issues but potent complementarity in subject range, study levels and geography. Degree awarding powers. In his capacity as Chair of 'T' Professor Pope had prepared the September strategy paper with the objective of prompting clarity of where 'T' stood. It would support the development of 'T' as a more formal federation/confederation, and it reflected the growing anxiety of 'T'; treading water while there was institutional commitment, but a lack of clarity about what that commitment was. There no need to step forward merely for the sake of it and the Chair had warmed to working on the sense of 'togetherness' to make an improved perception of 'T' internally and to move forward with some caution about the shape it would take. The other options and a reflection on 'T' as a true or right option would all spill out whether it had 'wheel or whether it was a tool of convenience'.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Priory Institute</td>
<td>The difficulties of even raising a question institutionally about a different future for an institution can be challenging and recently had been experience by Priory. Priory Institute is going to undergo a strategic options review and because of this it would be impossible to contemplate the issues in the 'T' strategy paper prior to the outcome of that review. Recognition that 'T' is at a very different point from that which it was at 3 years ago. It now has a different shape and character and there has been a period of testing and emergence of regional groupings that is only just beginning to show. However, 'T' has identified a number of things that it is certain about, as well as some uncertainties. It is an important process to review these things both institutionally and collectively. Conscious of the 'academic' driver of 'T' and would be interested to test that within 'T'. But the Strategy paper seems to be a step too far and twelfth the present position of Priory would be untenable.</td>
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The discussions of the Group as summarised later (from my notes to the Policy Group) were that-

- Some members of the Group felt that things were moving too far and too fast.
- BUT there was a sense that 'T' could not remain exactly where it was
- There needed to be an evaluation of what had to be done, and to what extent gains had been made
- There needed to be a least one other centre and an identified eighth institution stood out as a 'non-joined' institution and this could help the move to the term of 'confederation' and the bedding down process. The sorts of signal that would be sent if the eighth institution were to join might be useful and would not disrupt institutional integrity
- Further evaluation of the above proposal would have to be made.

The outcome of the meeting was that the following week at the scheduled 'T' Policy Group Meeting each member would bring three points that they would like to contribute to the discussion of 'T'. The Chair again contextualised the need for 'T' to structure around 'purpose' and to keep in mind what had been suggested in an earlier meeting (by Professor Searle) that 'T' should be 'academically led, not administratively driven'. The Policy Group were working hard. It was hoped that this exercise would help to generate a shared purpose and support the articulation of a new mission and revised Heads of Agreement.

The main points and the discussion elaborated on at the meeting can be summarised as follows:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTION</th>
<th>DISCUSSION POINTS BROUGHT TO MEETING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashdown (Searle)</td>
<td>1) The importance of an academically driven association collaborating over issues like curriculum, standards and awards. An association where 'T' is a kitemark.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) The review of 'T' constitution so that it can exercise contractual responsibilities in its own right, noting the potential of sovereignty exercised on behalf of independent members and for specific purposes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3) Stronger links at subject and operational levels of 'T' membership. An emphasis on horizontal rather than vertical connections between institutions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>'T's collaborative management is ahead of the game. Discussion stimulated by the GMP project has taught us that we won't always be in a 'win-win' situation but if we are to command our own agenda it does not mean always following HEFCE initiatives.</td>
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<td>There is a case for 'exceptionality of project' – ie the calibre of students delivered from specialist institutions, which goes to the heart of our academic claim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryanstone (Close)</td>
<td>1) Convergent needs and how to make collaboration work for 'T'</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) The fragility of 'T' &amp; how it can be strengthened and moved forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) The emergence of the requirement of different speeds of movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>The above needs to be taken into consideration as part of a deeper analysis of where 'T' is, in order for it to be able to move forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coundon (Avis)</td>
<td>1) Internal vs External Drivers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The heart of the matter, and source of recent emerging tensions.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A STRATEGIC REVIEW OF 'T' BY EXTERNAL CONSULTANTS

Whilst the 'T' Policy Group considered the implications of their association in the light of the HEFCE review and the project evaluation under the Restructuring and Collaboration Fund, an independent approach was made to the partnership by a...
national think tank, anonymised for the purposes of this discussion as XYHE. An offer was made by them for independent consultancy that they would sponsor to conduct a strategic review of 'T'. This was because 'T' was interesting to them as a 'live' and effective model of collaboration, and they believed that they could help the 'T' consider its future and shape longer term strategic plans.

The proposition put by XYHE to the Chair of 'T' was in turn communicated by him in the context of "the heightened profile that the 'T' partnership is now getting with particular reference, I think, to our mention in the Ramsden Report'. The Chair referred to significant names of people connected with the XYHE and how interest was growing in formal alliances that showed good progress and represented best practice. This was particularly so against the backdrop of the Secretary of State for Education's interest in looking at the future shape of HE. The Chair also alluded to the view that Estelle Morris (then Secretary of State for Education) was attracted to some form of rationalisation of the sector, with the incentive of a much improved fund (a re-jigged Restructuring and Collaboration fund) to oil the wheels.

The fact that XYHE would be prepared to fund a joint project to look at the potential added academic value and the realizable cost gains within 'T' as an innovative study in the UK, was considered to be a positive indicator by the Chair. Such a project, he suggested, would go elegantly back-to-back with the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project outcomes. It would also help to forge an improved model and:

> a high profile publication for 'T' at what might well prove to be an important moment in HE history

No mention of money or project timetable was made at this point by the Consultants, although the Chair suggested that it would be expedient to incorporate a presentation by XYHE into the scheduled Strategy Group meeting of November 2\textsuperscript{nd} "especially in view of current strategic internal debates about direction. If you are agreeable I shall indicate this moment as a decision date with them”

At the same time the Chair indicated that if Policy Group felt that there would be merit in progressing the matter sooner, they should let him know. The letter elicited immediate responses from three members of 'T'. The first email reply indicated:

> ... I would not be comfortable with [the Consultants] being given the impression that 2\textsuperscript{nd} November is our 'decision day'
I really can’t remember you advising us that you were due to have this meeting. In any case, in future, I think it would be helpful for the Policy Group to formally agree in advance any meeting with any government-connected organisation. This will allow the Policy Group to employ standard diplomatic practice i.e. research the role of the organisation (if necessary) and then agree a general policy line before the meeting takes place. We could do the latter by email.

In reply the Chair made three points:-

1. The approach by XYHE was unsolicited. It has become usual over the last year for interest to be shown in 'T' by various agencies, viz. Council of Church Colleges, HEFCE, HESDA, SCOP, Universities UK, to name but a few.

As you would expect first contact is made with the Chair. I think colleagues would expect this, and I believe that they would wish the Chairman to champion 'T' whenever the opportunity arises. This I have done and continue to do in the interests of forwarding the ideals of 'T' and ensuring that as a high-profile project with considerable investment (material and philosophical) by member institutions a message of cohesion and purpose is appropriately distributed, both across the Consortium and beyond. I believe that Policy Group partners and indeed our own staff would be disappointed with less.

2. Notwithstanding your claim that you knew nothing of this I would draw your attention to the September 'T' Chairman’s Report paragraph 2. The note I think is clear and includes a comment that I would keep members briefed. That I have since done.

3. The offer now requires the agreement of the Policy Group. I believe it would be perceived as extraordinary if we refused. Early in the New Year will be presenting the outcomes of our Developing Collaborative Management Skills projects to HE colleagues. This will be very high profile and will serve to further consolidate 'T' in the minds of third party observers as well as helping confirm to HEFCE that their investment has been well spent.

What is interesting about the proposal from XYHE is that it will help provide us with a few of the answers that are currently missing in our initiative and they will pay!

The GMP project investigates and evaluates the matter of Consortium Management from an organisation behaviour perspective i.e. lessons learned and challenges to be overcome. This project would help us evaluate the added value (current and potential) side of the equation - overhead costs and academic complementarity. These are two issues that you amongst others have rehearsed as a concern at strategy meetings over the last year.

A second immediate response from another member of the Policy Group followed very promptly, challenging the Chair’s championing of the XYHE strategic review proposals and his argument that it would both bring high profile to 'T', consolidate it in the minds of third party observers and help confirm to HEFCE that their investment has been well spent. It continued:
While I obviously understand these arguments, I have to say that they all relate to external perspectives. Once again, we are placed in the position of being driven by how others see us, rather than how we see ourselves. This worries me, as the latter has not yet been resolved. Our last meeting, on Friday 28 September, made this clear...

I am now concerned that our forthcoming meeting will be dominated by this issue, rather than our original intention to each provide 3 priority areas for consideration. I think that we are at a pivotal moment in terms of our commitment to ‘T’, how we handle this project proposal could tip the balance.

Internal cohesion and purpose should be one of our priorities at this time. I appreciate that this must be frustrating for you, but as Chair, your judgements must take account of your colleagues views.”

4.9 POLICY GROUP MEETING OF NOVEMBER 2nd 2001

Consideration of the potential Strategic Review of ‘T’ by XYHE was the first item on the Policy Group Agenda of November 2nd 2001. Despite the view that it was embraced by some (four broadly in favour) and not welcomed by others (a grouping of three), after discussion it was agreed that XYHE and the consultants be invited to a Policy Group meeting at the end of the month and that in principle, the project would be worthwhile pursuing subject to a number of caveats. The discussions concluded that if the Review focused on mapping the needs of the physical and material side of collaborative modeling using experiences from ‘T’ as a case study and aimed to get under the skin of the consortium providing tangible evidence of both costs and benefits, it would add value to what was known so far. The following points were noted as essentials:

- That the Policy Group would have an opportunity to explore the parameters of the project with XYHE and be able to set the agenda and terms of reference
- That the Policy Group would wish to be reassured who would be the likely audience(s) and to see and discuss the outcomes prior to publication
- That ‘T’ would be joint signatories and that there would be joint authorship (any draft would be subject to ‘T’ approval – the Policy Group were mindful of the fact that XYHE often outsourced its research)

Moving on to the substantive item of sharing perspectives on ‘T’ futures and the potential for a University of the Arts, the discussion picked up where it had left off the previous week and elaborated the points that the Policy Group had discussed at their special strategy meeting. In their conversations the Group moved further toward expressing themselves visually and the following diagrams were sketched out on the flipchart as a potential way forward.
Model 1 worked through what a potential University of the Arts could look like. It was talked about in a purely hypothetical way. Again a split was evident between those exhibiting overt enthusiasm for the idea compared with the feeling exuded by others of 'going along with it for the sake of discussion'. Even to have got to this point was only possible after the process discussion where it was agreed to suspend scepticism about the potential barriers and detail in order to secure some kind of momentum and exploration of the agendas. The challenge would be the development work in terms of finding the "glue" that holds 'T' together – a necessary for 'T' business at any level, but for a high profile and stretching project in particular. Examining the extent that 'the glue' would centre on academic agreements was argued by some as going to the heart of specialism, and indeed if this was the case for 'T' the question was how could individual interests and intents be reconciled and manifested?.

A further representation, set out in Model 2, looked at the relationships that had formed within 'T' as a ring and discussion focused on what the 'value added' achieved by the ring could be – i.e. the element that would satisfy the 10%
enhancement in premium funding that the specialist institutional sector knew they were privileged to receive.

This brought the Policy Group on to considerations of logistical operations and how an academic collaboration might work. It acknowledged both competitive and collaborative instincts and how this could be played out by groups of HEIs in the dynamic of the HE sector predicated on competitive behaviour. The Policy Group talked around the issue of how they were unable to satisfactorily resolve the best way to proceed referring to the example of a postgraduate certificate in education where agreement could not be reached. Some partners wanted as a group to devise a new postgraduate certificate in education, whereas one institution who already offered it, believed that the best way forward would be for those within the consortium to enrol on their accredited and highly successful course. This was an example where self-interest was the priority and coupling around it was to be preferred rather than devising something new. There was no question that the existing PGCE would be branded as a 'T' programme.

It was agreed that what was important was that the ring should embrace students and staff development. However, there were other more 'thorny' questions about whether the institutions should focus around one validating partner, and not the five existing validators that currently existed. What would it be that the consortium would group around? All of these were big questions that seemed to suggest external facilitation. Apart from Coundon Institute, each institution would be looking or aspiring to look at degree awarding powers. Priory Institute stated categorically that in its current context it could not talk about validation although the notion of standards was important to it. External perspectives of what 'T' appeared to constitute were taken into account:

\[
\text{people often ask, if we continue to represent ourselves forcefully, why are we not joined at the hip in terms of validation and standards?}
\]

The discussion also noted that it would be naïve to believe that 'T' could come get to the position of a University of the Arts in one go from a standing start. A step change would be necessary to explore whether Coundon could or would allow its power to be the catalyst for development so that best practice could be shared. However, as Professor Avis representing Coundon was not present at this discussion this would have to be talked through. The agreement of those present was that each partner needed to have a better understanding of each others' institution, including cultural
mapping, to understand who the audiences would be and where the partners would play in the sector. With the notion of the 'ring' as a consortium it was agreed that there was a basis and it was summed up as "it's what we do together that we don't do separately that is important". The challenge, however, remained of how to describe the ring.

FIGURE 14: A UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS ? – MODEL 2

At the close of the meeting on November 2\textsuperscript{nd} it was agreed that there should be an overnight 'away day' event in the New Year to consider how best to move 'T' forward in the light of recent uncertainties about the next steps and in the light of the discussions about members feeling a need to 'move at different speeds'. The impending end of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project and its culminating national conference in London together with the fourth 'T' Annual Conference in April at which the Chief Executive of HEFCE had agreed to act as keynote were both strong drivers for an agreed strategy and outcome from 'T's work. The 'T' ‘away day’ in January would be facilitated by the project facilitator who had overseen each of the CEO Workshops as part of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project.
5.0 PREPARATION FOR THE JANUARY STRATEGIC AWAYDAY RESIDENTIAL

The Chair drafted a follow up paper to the November 2nd meeting entitled 'T' - Future Shape and Purpose. In this he reminded partners of the considerable stake that they had in the 'T' project described in the matrix diagram and the considerations of how best to move 'T' forward in the light of recent uncertainties. He was conscious of earlier discussions about members' feeling the need to 'move at different speeds'. The key strands as summarized by the Chair included the common cause in wishing to elevate the academic agenda above that of administration and systems, seeking to add value through its academic interactions, particularly in the areas of cognate subject inter-disciplinarity and to find vehicles where outcomes could be made public, that infrastructures must continue to be a 'live' issue in the context of an academic purpose, and that these would/should shape the future arrangements within 'T', all member support for the continuance of 'T' as a 'going concern' but understanding that within the structure there would be differing relationships.

One such relationship was likely to be that of a more formal legal arrangement between some 'T' partners that could act as a 'test model' for other members but still provide an 'entry strategy' for those currently still considering options. Other relationships would be built upon twinning for particular purposes and/or the ongoing capability for such matters as joint procurement, new course developments, overseas recruitment. A number of members were clear that they believed the overarching 'mission' for 'T' was that it should develop as a 'University of the Arts' by federal arrangement and that at least one member's vision was that this should be accompanied by seeking of degree awarding powers with a common strand being security of academic standards.

Other discussion points revolved around not being driven, (as one or two members continued to have the sensation of the 'T' agenda being externally orchestrated rather than internally designed); the need to engage students and involve Governors more positively in the 'T' construct; the need for all to be agreed about the public face of 'T' and to speak with a single voice; and additionally the wish to examine the cost/benefits of current and future arrangement and especially those being pursued through the project with XYHE.

Thus in preparation for the residential Strategy meeting in January 2002 the agenda was set as consideration of the future of 'T' in its present shape but with some
members wishing to ‘fast track’ to a next stage, and with the understanding that these might wish to re-form through a legal agreement. At the same time agreement was secured that all members would need to support those in ‘fast track’ mode and to ensure that the process did not ‘uncouple’ ‘T’ symmetries and would still enable other new joiners to the fast track model. In parallel, the Policy Group would consider and draw up a ‘modus operandi’ to improve academic exchange and build improved academic partnerships.

At the beginning of the New Year (January 2002), in setting the scene for the meeting, it was recognized that pressure was mounting on ‘T’ both internally (from the second tier management Group, the Development and Operations Group who were requiring clarification of ‘T’ future strategy) and externally as expectations were high. HEFCE would be anticipating further forward movement: their own external evaluation of ‘T’ as a result of funding from the Restructuring and Collaboration Fund was shortly due to be published and the ‘T’ internal strategic review by External Consultants also arrived in time for discussion at the CEO residential in January 2002. All of this combined with a culminating national conference of the ‘Developing Collaborative Management Skills’ project at the Royal Geographical Society in February 2002 and a ‘T’ Annual Conference for partner communities at Holyhead Institute and at which the Chief Executive of HEFCE would be keynote speaker at the end of April 2002 acted as levers (and pressures) for realising formally the gains and commitments that had been made within the partnership during the preceding three years.

Early in the new year, one CEO wrote to say that unfortunately circumstances prevented his attending the strategy day and instead he would be sending his Vice CEO. However, he felt that he should put on paper his perspective, which

...at the risk of boring you has not changed greatly over our meetings since the first Goodwood Awayday in April 2001.

While this CEO acknowledged enthusiasm to move forward to some kind of federal arrangement by some ‘T’ partners, he reasserted his institution’s keenness to emphasise the independence of mission of the partners and his wish not to proceed with any form of federal arrangement without a very clear academic and economic rationale that would support the strategic ambitions of ‘T’. He could not see investigating the potential of a ‘University of the Arts’ as an obvious way forward for his institution because of the other collaborative partnerships that he was involved with. What he wanted from ‘T’ was an internal strategic view that would help clarify
whether the energy and resources put into collaboration in fact produced significant benefits to the institution and most importantly, to the students. Thus it was a view requiring 'T' as a giving institution as opposed to one where there was both 'tie-in- and 'buy-in' His preference for engagement in 'T' was expressed as their remaining autonomous institutions, linked as currently, in a collaborative network. He noted:

I do value the project based relationships that 'T' has facilitated, such as our close working relationship with other institutions, the work of the IT, Finance Groups and so on and the ability to share practice by CEOs and throughout the organizations. All of this I see as the tangible benefits of collaboration.

My personal view is that 'T' has proved valuable to this institution and ... I would want to remain at the table and as an active partner in projects, but I cannot commit the institution to a closer federation at this stage, though of course, I would not want to rule out options for the future.

(CEO Letter to Policy Group, 9th January, 2002)

6.0 RESIDENTIAL 4: POLICY GROUP WORKSHOP AT WINCHESTER, (JANUARY 2002)

The Policy Group Residential at Winchester in January 2002 was thus again set against a backdrop of the sense of urgency that had been created and the need for impact. It was fifteen months since the first CEO residential of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project led by the external consultant and project facilitator. Progress in giving practical form to the aspiration of 'T' being led by an academic rather than purely financial or administrative logic had been limited and expressed hopes for the consortium to become a standard for academic excellence had yet to be realized. Despite the shared and deep commitment to the value of specialist provision within their own particular institution, reciprocal institutional understanding had been slow and the aspiration of mapping institutional activity had yet to be carried out and presented. The expressed aspirations for 'T' to be able to actively influence, rather than merely respond to various national, regional and funding council agendas and to shape external opinion as to the value of specialist provision was not apparent despite its strong external visibility. The external facilitator of the CEO residential workshops noted in feeding back to the Policy Group:

Collaboration within the Policy Group continues to be problematic; it is still difficult for you as Principals, who are perhaps used to a high degree of power and authority within your own institution to work collaboratively on an equal basis with a group of your peers. The difficulties associated with arranging face-to-face meetings that all attend are possibly symptomatic of the difficulties members have in mastering the new skills of inter-institutional collaboration. At times it is difficult to distinguish these interpersonal
difficulties associated with collaborative work, from the strategic tensions that a group of different specialist institutions inevitably must face and manage.

The facilitator characterized the various sources of 'resistance' that the Policy Group had encountered in the last twelve months in trying to achieve greater clarity for the strategic and structural future of 'T'. He likened the consortium to a 'teenager' - keen to capture all the benefits of intimacy with none of the concomitant commitments - and believed that this residential was the opportunity to put the future flesh on 'T's development. The aim was thus to translate into practice various descriptors that had used such phrases as 'widening and deepening' 'moving forward' 'formalising' and 'strengthening' the consortium.

Once again, the achievements of 'T' were revisited, as well as the current pressures, including the fact that with the wisdom of hindsight the language of federation and confederation had set 'T' off-balance and had been in some quarters perceived as a threat to the prized autonomy of participating institutions. One CEO noted:

...essentially the 'voluntary' and reasoned nature of participation within 'T' felt at risk in the discussions of developing stronger forms of membership that might replace these with 'requirements'. This undermined ownership and control of institutional destiny.

A paradox of collaboration was further explored of the distinction between 'freedom from' versus 'freedom to'. All believed that the quality of academic provision in specialist institutions depended upon the flexibility and responsiveness that made institutional autonomy possible. Some CEOs saw 'autonomy' as complete self-determination, or freedom from external control. In a hierarchical sense autonomy would look like a zero sum game - one person or group's autonomy of action implies the subordinate's lack of freedom. Therefore in a merger the concern would be that the quality of specialist provision would be subordinated to the strategic objectives of a larger and more diverse institution. However, a collaborative venture offers the opportunity of a synergistic or complementary view of autonomy in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Thus 'T' should be able to enhance the autonomy of individual institutions by enhancing the capabilities of each of its members.

The discussion that followed focused on the ways that 'T' could support the CEOs in developing the missions of their institutions rather than focusing on structures through which it might develop, with all the associated fears of external constraint and loss of power and control. There emerged two subgroups who would look at a strategy for the development of academic collaborations over the next three years:
1. Priory, Coundon and Earlsdon Institutes looking at how collaboration could enhance practice based research within their institutions (and 'T'?)
2. Sunnybank, Bryanstone, Holyhead and Ashdown looking at the development of innovative inter-disciplinary courses with common validation run across institutions.

While these two points of focus clearly represented some of the differences of mission and identity between participants, there was a clear overlap between the two groupings. The challenges of the particularities of practice based research paralleled those involved in performance based research, and the development of cross-institutional interdisciplinary course would be of relevance to all within 'T'. Thus rather than the ‘groupings’ being viewed as a schism within 'T' they could operate as centres of gravity around which related aspects of the academic strategy could be developed in the future.

The January meeting therefore boded well for a positive outcome toward the end of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. It was a tentative outcome that could be expressed at the culminating national Collaborative Management Conference in February 2002. This had already attracted many Vice Chancellors and members of Senior Management teams from both further and higher education institutions as well as representatives from the Funding Councils, the Regional Development Agencies, National Training Organisations (now Sector Skills Councils) and other stakeholders (for programme see Appendix 6).

7.0 LEAD UP TO THE FOURTH 'T' ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The final part of the account, relates to March and April 2002, where the focus was on the Fourth 'T' Annual Conference in April. This was to be held at one of the partner institutions where the HEFCE Chief Executive was to be in attendance as keynote speaker. It would also need to resolve whether or not to pursue XYHE’s recommendation that 'T' might like to seek further funding under the HEFCE Strategic Development Fund in order to explore the possibility for a University of the Arts.

Following the success of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project conference in February 2002, the Chair of 'T' immediately followed up his congratulations by considering 'where to next?':

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...the programme, however, continues. None of us I think would like to see the recent conference or its published report as a conclusion to the efforts that we have made over the last three years to begin to shape a modus for alliance management. In many respects the GMP programme was a useful capture of our on-going deliberations about 'T' and the challenges that inter-institutional work present.

It was noted that the background of a UK wide reconsideration of the nature and purpose of higher education and its delivery had both helped and hindered the programme - helped in respect of the heightened level of interest shown by higher education participants and observers, whilst hindered (mainly internally) by anxieties about 'where all this might lead'. However, the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project processes had helped focus 'T's agenda and the future shape of its construct. These were summarized by the Chair as 'T' being in:

...an excellent position to develop a project further that cascades lessons learned in alliance management (including our wish to look at enhancement for research management) across the partnership by using a combination of learning and delivery through distance mechanisms. The fallout for such a project could be beneficial on five counts

- A publishable 'lessons learned' building upon our experience
- The upskilling of our management groups (e.g. HR realisation)
- A positive 'bleed-out' into the sector
- A pro-active utilization of video-conferencing
- A basis from which 'T' could develop an E-university proposition for export

My field notes recorded that I had detected a reluctance on the part of some CEOs to go further and that at the Conference I had noted that two institutions had come up to me and breathed a sigh of relief that the Conference had been a success. As far as they were concerned the discussions on futures of a model for 'T' were now concluded. I was aware, however, that there were a number of unfinished agendas: HEFCE had conducted its evaluation of 'T' as part of its report into the Restructuring and Collaboration Fund and the final report was awaited, the XYHE Strategic Review of 'T' had been received, but no positive response had yet been made to it by the Policy Group, and noone, really wanted to 'rock the boat' before the Annual Conference.

In early March, the body behind the XYHE Report urged 'T' to make a formal response in relation to receipt of the report, explaining that they would be meeting with Sir Howard Newby in the middle of the month. After discussion at the Policy Group a holding letter was drafted explaining that the Policy Group were "intrigued by the proposition outlined in the report.... However, it is emerging within the group that there are those who wish to move forward more rapidly than others". The letter was
circulated as a draft and evoked quick responses. Three members were unhappy, and one was particularly unhappy, confirming that he wanted an amended letter to go to the supporting organization, as well as his own indication that he would be writing separately to the organization on behalf of his institution. The other four were happy to proceed with the proposition and some took up a conciliatory position to try and resolve the conflict that was emerging:

...whether we agree or disagree with the XYHE Report, it has a status and I see little point in arguing about some of the detail. What it facilitates is progression for those so minded and an opportunity for us all to define the 'status quo'. Such as there is a pact with the Funding Council, this was forged when HEFCE supported 'T' as a collaborative initiative some years ago. They are naturally interested in where we have got to and I think it a bit naive to imagine the XYHE body has failed to give them a view on this already.

(Professor Searle, Ashdown Institute)

Faced with the impasse between those who supported the XYHE Report as a way forward and those that did not, the holding letter, (after negotiation) was sent. The eventual decision about what to do with the report and such resolution as there was, took place after the field research was concluded, and the immediate concern of the Annual Conference had passed.

The Conference itself was notable for the fact that each CEO wished to speak about their institution, rather than let the Chair speak on their behalf and it was observed that this reinforced the impression of a collective of individual institutions working through 'T' rather than a collective in its own right – a distinction not lost on HEFCE's Chief Executive, who commended their efforts and wryly referred to 'T' members as 'ferrets in a sack!'

THE ACCOUNTS OF 'T' BY OTHERS

8.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE ACCOUNTS OF 'T' BY OTHERS

'T' had always generated interest as 'something different' and pioneering, and indeed part of the strategy of 'T' was to be outward facing and to position itself within the HE sector as an alternative model of collaboration. From the outset it was vigorous in shaping bids for a whole spectrum of HEFCE special initiatives and was keen to be seen as a 'player' in the emerging regional agendas.
Following its success in these areas it was not surprising that a number of external reviews and evaluations of 'T' took place. In the context of this research, two can be drawn upon as data to compare and contrast with the data generated by the researcher in her capacity, initially as reflective practitioner, moving to practitioner researcher and later in this research as an empirical researcher. These 'accounts of others' also serve to corroborate the findings that result from the foregoing account of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project and its impact over the three year period of the research.

The two particular reports of reviews relied upon at this point in the research are two that have already been highlighted in the previous account:

1) The HEFCE Review of it Restructuring and Collaborative Funded Projects (that took place in the autumn of 2001/early 2002);

Their juxtaposition here is interesting as two external sources of evidence based on independent interviews with each member of the 'T' Group. On the basis of these interviews the respective consultants put together their published reports. The points of distinction are that while both were produced as a result of external interest in 'T', the Strategic Review of 'T' by XYHE remained an internal report, while the report commissioned by HEFCE on its Restructuring and Collaborative Fund is publicly available.

9.0 'T' CASE STUDY AS PART OF THE HEFCE EVALUATION OF COLLABORATION IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

This HEFCE evaluation was based on case studies of twelve collaborative projects funded under the HEFCE Restructuring and Collaboration Fund with the objectives of:

- Examining and analysing a small number of collaborative projects as case studies (their method, objectives, outcomes, costs and benefits)
- Drawing out any evidence of the particular and generic benefits of collaboration (costs/drawback and obstacles)
- Analysing and assessing how HEIs make decision concerning proposed collaborative projects (proposed critical success factors)
- Drawing out any evidence for, and the extent of any particular and generic:
opportunities for greater collaboration and how they might be exploited
- obstacles to greater collaboration and how they might be overcome

- Recommending how the Restructuring and Collaboration Fund might be
developed to better support collaboration in the future

(Summary of Objectives presented by Evaluation Associates,

Against the backdrop of external and internal agendas of expansion and new provision, regional participation and rationalisation HEFCE recognised that both the Restructuring and Collaborative Fund, and its successor the Strategic Development Fund would be important in pump priming future agendas. This was presented by HEFCE as 'oiling the wheels rather than forcing the agenda' for strategic change and encouraging innovation while at the same time limiting financial exposure.

At the meeting called by HEFCE for those participants involved in the HEFCE evaluation of collaborative provision, current concerns and questions for the future of collaboration were identified. The factors supported those covered in the material on the Policy Literature chapter of this research and included: the continuing pressure on the unit of resource; a highly competitive market for a shrinking student pool; increasing differentiation of mission; ongoing targets to widen access to higher education and to boost participation; changing future HE landscapes and boundaries with further education; and the dynamics of regional development. Attendant government policy and incentives on the part of the Funding Council pointed to a future where collaboration was an embedded theme for the future. With external pressures likely to increase questions were raised in key areas of the report about how to secure academic collaboration critical to systemic institutional collaboration, how to work through differences in institutional cultures, working conditions and management styles as well as how to create the infrastructure and expertise to build responses to funding opportunities and sustainable collaboration.

'T' featured in the body of the HEFCE Evaluation of Collaboration in the HE Sector report as an 'alliance' according to a typology of five broad modes of collaboration. These five modes of collaborative potential encompassed mergers, transfers, federations, cooperations and alliances and their degree of intensity was recognised as depending on a range of factors that included the strategic aims of the partners, the size of potential threats or opportunities and existing organisational cultures.

In this context, alliance was defined as:
A loose confederation of institutions or departments that pursue common agendas and interests but do not undertake joint provision under the alliance


However, the narrative of the report also indicated that 'T' had the potential to develop into a federation which was recognised as a more intensive collaborative mode than an alliance, but one less intensive than a merger, it was referred to as one where institutions agreed to meet shared goals under a common umbrella. It also suggested that on balance, in the autumn of 2001, members of 'T' were sharing in a public way the 'buy-in' and intent to explore this type of association - something that was much more evident than would have been thought by their approach through observing them in action at Policy Group. An interesting contrast in the report was made with the Council of Church Colleges where Evaluation Associates expressed the view that many higher education institutions in that grouping were being absorbed by larger institutions.

'T' was also referenced as a significant model when considering the value of leadership in the collaborative context. The Developing Collaborative Management Skills project was highlighted as an example of good practice and as a vehicle for directly tackling such skills for senior executives, set in the context of academic institutions' ambivalence toward leadership. The contrast was made between older institutions and polytechnics and other post 1992 HEIs. The former illustrated a tradition of collegiate working and decision-making resulting in academics having a strong voice in determining policy and setting priorities, whereas the latter were more accustomed to strong central management. From the fieldwork conducted by Evaluation Associates for the HEFCE Evaluation of Collaboration in HE there was both a conclusion and an endorsement about the need for strong visionary and strategic leadership playing a critical factor in the success of collaboration between institutions and:

for the most intensive collaborations, especially mergers, leaders need to underpin their commitment with the strength of personality to guide staff through the inevitable complexity and inherent concerns over jobs and values. Here, personalities matter as much as institution history. Leaders need to take risks with reputations, not just their institutions but also their own. And they need a personal chemistry to work with new partners and cope with inevitable tensions within their own institutions

Within the write-up of the 'T' case study, there was reference to both personal leadership and personal relationships within the context of the close art and design context initially, and later including the two performing arts institutions. The drivers of 'T' as articulated in the report included:

- the role mapped out for HE in the new government's Green Paper on the Regions
- small specialist HE institutions' sense of isolation and vulnerability
- Professor Pope's personal interest in strategy and planning

After setting out the nine strategic intents of 'T' as publicly stated, the comment was made that strategically there was much that united the member institutions including the shared vision of arts, communication and design, shaping social and economic boundaries and breaking new cultural ground; research; as well as recognising the importance of strategic alliances for the future of small specialist arts colleges. However, what was also noted was the different members' emphasis on whether 'T' should be the primary glue that held such institutions together, or was it just one of several academic collaborations had come through in this evaluation. The fact was noted that 'T' was not 'exclusive' and allowed each of the partners to undertake other collaborations; for example:

- six have active bilateral academic links with their validating HEIs;
- one institution, Earlsdon Institute was singled out as being particularly strong sub-regionally;
- Priory Institute enjoyed strong bilateral collaborations outside the 'T' envelope;

An interesting observation was that although Restructuring and Collaborative Funding had been crucial to the success of 'T' representing a good investment by HEFCE in terms of creating an infrastructure and a climate for institutional collaborations, the strong desire among members to collaborate suggested that ways and means would have been found to work together, albeit at a lower level. While the collaboration through 'T' was considered as beginning to bear fruit in academic affairs as well as management matters, concerns had been picked up from individual institutions about the transactional and opportunity costs of some of the collaborations, that could be seen to outweigh the acknowledged benefits. Thus while there was scope to reduce the overhead costs of the higher education sector through consolidation or collaboration two issues had to be separated:

- where collaboration has finite aims, objectives and timescales driven by resource pressures, it is likely in the long run to lead to reduced costs
- where the primary aim of collaboration is to achieve benefits beyond those available to a single institution and partners are not motivated primarily by
financial gain, the costs of collaboration will be on-going and there may be no administrative savings.

There were six significant outputs ascribed to 'T' as follows:

- a successful, subject-based consortium with an effective Directorate
- a bidding platform for capturing funds for further joint initiatives
- a model of alternative collaboration management disseminated via papers on national, regional and local platforms and a conference on Collaborative Management (February 2002)
- publications from the Creative Learning Futures sub-project
- promotional materials and information from the Pathways sub-project
- contribution at national and regional levels on the process of good management, widening participation and foundation degrees.

These in turn led to a number of 'T' outcomes that included not only an improved infrastructure and connectivity across the institutions but a more collegiate culture at Chief Executive level, which had spread to other academic and non-academic staff, support services and administration; for example, joint procurement of legal services, joint costing and pricing and joint work on human resource strategies as well as a broader academic community. It was noted that enthusiasm for shared academic work lagged behind joint support services, but that this was now developing and foundation degrees had provided a catalyst in this area. In summary, it was suggested that 'T' had generated

*a growing realisation that collaboration is a comfortable middle position between the extremes of autonomy and merger*

Key success factors for 'T', as presented by the HEFCE report, were expressed as an institutional willingness, "and in some cases desire, to collaborate"; leadership and consistent, clear signals of commitment from the top; and the HEFCE-funded Good Management Practice Project which although acknowledged as time-consuming, developed the Chief Executives' collaborative management skills. It was of note that at this point the researchers conducting the interviews picked up a degree of reticence about the nature of the collaboration from some quarters, illustrating that not all members of the Policy Group were as enthusiastic about the desire to collaborate.

In respect of its future prospects, 'T' was recorded as demonstrating the value of a regional institutional alliance based on subject coherence and that it was likely that strategically, the consortium would be sustainable in its present form as long as the individual institutions remained committed to this sort of collaboration for facilitating their missions. Operationally, 'T' has proved successful as a focal point for planning,
bidding for and managing discrete joint projects, which brought in sufficient overheads to maintain the Directorate.

The organic nature of ‘T’ was commented upon and it was felt that there was potential for it to grow to include further partners as opportunities arose and the needs of the sector and of Southern England in respect of its economy unfolded. If the consortium were to disintegrate (again one wonders whether this was a view formed through the feedback of behind the scenes activity revealed through the interviews or whether it was a general observation against the changing policy backdrop), the alternative for some of its members would be to seek closer relations with a nearby university.

Overall the report recorded that there was “a desire to deepen, and possibly widen”, the consortium and that this was likely to be the main driver of future engagement beyond the present level of project-based collaboration. This ‘front stage’ view in fact reflected the discussions (although not perhaps the level of frustration) that was similarly taking place behind the scenes and was about to be embarked upon, once again, with the project facilitator at the CEO residential in Winchester. It was stated in the report that some of the partners envisaged a joint strategic plan and evolution towards some form of federation. (Again this was an interesting point as the terminology of ‘federation’ had got through to the report, when in their private discussions the Policy Group had been at great pains to agree only to a ‘con-federal’ model, discounting a longer term vision of federation). A federation would require further formalisation of structures, perhaps aided by seeking a single degree-validating partner. The HEFCE report was not clear that all shared this evolutionary vision and destination and noted that two institutions, Earlsdon and Priory were currently considering whether the benefits they gain from ‘T’ outweigh the costs of this additional collaboration.

10.0 ‘T’ STRATEGIC REVIEW BY XYHE

The approach to ‘T’ by XYHE for a ‘Strategic Review’ had the objective of undertaking a piece of work that would identify the potential opportunities and present a current state SWOT analysis for each of the seven partner institutions. The individual analyses were then pooled to form a collective SWOT for ‘T’. The outcome would enable identification of areas for inter-institutional improvement and for ‘T’ as a whole that in turn would allow the consortium to ‘punch above its weight’. The
The ultimate goal was to extrapolate from both the collective SWOT and the individual 'T' SWOT to form potential future model(s), one of which (after discussion and agreement) could form the basis of a bid to HEFCE for funding under its new Strategic Development Fund. This funding would be used to implement the recommended model and to position 'T' as a case study to help inform the future of HE structures in the UK.

The agreement to a strategic review by 'XYHE' offering free external consultancy to 'T' in order to help the Policy Group to shape 'T's future and purpose was not lightly secured as has been highlighted in the account above. After the approach by the independent body, but one that worked closely with industry and higher education sector the main discussion points for 'T' at the end of October 2001 were those of 'driving' and not 'being driven'. One or two members of the Group had a sensation of the 'T' agenda being externally orchestrated rather than internally designed. An opposite view within the Policy Group, was that it posed yet another opportunity to achieve 'high profile' and that the review and approach could serve to further consolidate 'T' in the minds of third party observers as well as confirming to HEFCE that their investment had been well spent. The fact that this view was held by some concerned others who felt that the question of how 'T' members saw themselves had not yet been fully resolved and that it should not take place with anyone who could be directly or indirectly linked with the Funding Council.

A project, therefore, that was driven by how third parties view 'T' was considered a bit premature. The approach by XYHE was taking place at a sensitive and pivotal moment in the history of 'T', both in terms of members' commitment to 'T' as an entity and to its future shape and direction.

Following on from desk based research and interviews with members of the Policy Group, the initial findings of the consultancy review produced a report which addressed the HEI business context and the positioning of specialist institutions within it with their niche specialisms. The XYHE Strategic Review saw the generic issues for small specialist institutions as their potential vulnerability because of their inherently higher cost base, the threat from competitor (larger) institutions, the more limited ability to offer the range of experiences available in a later institution, the more limited ability to market itself internationally and the dependence on high quality, key staff (in both research and teaching) who could be attracted to better resourced teams in larger institutions and who could also offer a securer future or higher pay.
Partnership in their view offered the generic solution in that many of the things that make the specialist institutions potentially vulnerable could be overcome while still preserving the intimate scale, brand identity and such autonomy for each institution as was appropriate and compatible with the overarching aim of delivering excellence through practical research.

The XYHE Report noted how successful individual ‘T’ members were and both the strength of their brand and reputation in particular fields. The SWOT analysis following the areas discussed at individual interviews in December 2001/January 2002 was as follows

**TABLE 25: XYHE CONSULTANT SWOT ANALYSIS**

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<th>SWOT</th>
<th>SUMMARY OF ‘T’ SWOT ANALYSIS BY XYHE CONSULTANTS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>‘T’ Strengths</strong></td>
<td>• High reputation as a provider for the particular courses offered – and distinctive ‘character’ of the institutions – for some/all of: in-depth niche specialism, the ‘teacher/practitioner’ brand image, location, history/tradition, vocational nature of offerings, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Agility and responsiveness of the small(er) institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strong connections with Europe/the international market, for business partnership, foreign students, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The creative industries benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High employability of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>‘T’ opportunities</strong></td>
<td>• Maximise the research funding and gain acceptability for applications-based research – from RAE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increase international exposure through widened business partnerships, exhibitions, research fellowships etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Consider bringing other colleges into ‘T’ to strengthen the consortium – eg a Dance college, Lamda etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop new courses – individually and/or in partnership with others, to offer eg degrees in courses which are complementary – “sound degrees”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increase revenue from higher numbers of international students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maximise use of resources eg through “summer schools”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Respond to government’s “widening participation” agenda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enhance reputation – and revenue – from increased consultancy work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pursue degree awarding powers – individually/collective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>‘T’ Weaknesses</strong></td>
<td>• High dependency on HEFCE and LSC for funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• General quality – and maintenance cost – of buildings/estates (not universal however).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Split sites in some cases means higher overhead costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Staff retention – particularly for admin/support staff in high cost areas + threat of poaching for teaching staff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | • Small and niche may be seen as elitist and is a barrier to achieving government’s...
In addition to the SWOT analysis, XYHE engaged in a strategic visioning exercise with the CEOs at interview where each was asked to plot points on a scale of 1-10 against each of 13 criteria of importance to the HEI (courses, staff, research, QA, etc). The positioning of points on this scale represented, at the bottom level (0,1,2, etc) a desire to retain individual autonomy, with little collaboration and at the top end of the scale (8,9,10) a feeling of comfort at aiming for a higher degree of collaboration. From this a diagram was produced that represented a snapshot in time of 'T' members' relative ease with pursuing greater or lesser collaboration in the 13 areas concerned. The areas that presented the greatest overall agreement (although some members vehemently objected to the methodology and thus the veracity of the result) were Research, IT/Computing, Library/Learning Resources and Quality Assurance.

From both the SWOT analysis and from the strategic visioning exercise which all participants carried out, XYHE developed an approach to a continually evolving 'collaboration' with a potential goal of a 'University of the Arts'. This entailed four flexible and phased stages leading to an ever increasing approach to collaborative working as follows:

Stage 1 – Identified elements of common interest from 'T' strategic visioning exercise are addressed bringing tangible and intangible benefits quickly, effectively and without threat;

Stage 2 – Informal Collaboration: Some alignment of courses is recommended following on from a curriculum mapping exercise in Stage 1. The improvement of an
already consistent QA programme would complement the enhanced collaborative approach;

Stage 3 – Formal Collaboration: the decision to incorporate or not in order to generate tighter links between members along with the benefits of being recognized legally as an entity. The ability to fend off threatening behaviour from other HEIs would be much enhanced, PR and marketing could be uprated to talk of genuine formal collaboration with a consequent increase in reputation and of student numbers. The question of degree awarding powers would be broached, since this was now becoming much more of a reality for the consortium as a whole;

Stage 4 – transformation to a University of the Arts, if members so wish.

It was stressed by XYHE that the approach presented had the advantage that at any major stage, 'T' members could choose either to proceed to the next stage or stay in their current position with the attendant benefits to date.

11.0 WHAT WAS LEARNT FROM THIS ACCOUNT OF ‘T’ BY OTHERS

Both of these reports captured an external perspective about the potential of what 'T' could offer. While the HEFCE Evaluation was grounded in the context of encouraging the institutions in the sector to be innovative and not to be risk averse, the XYHE Report seized on the ideas suggested by some and ran with it, suggesting how value could be added from adopting some kind of common curriculum, initially paving the way for the potential to pursue degree awarding powers as a collective entity. While this would offer greater flexibility, greater curriculum breadth and depth, a higher and more consistent degree of quality and new market opportunities acting as a precursor to incorporation (if 'T' so wished), it failed to estimate the degree of resistance that could be generated if there was not absolute consensus to move forward. The good idea that was irresistible to some, could engender the 'sheet anchor' behaviour of others, and was contrary to the incremental approach to something else (never quite articulated) favoured by others. Thus without the shared strategic intent being in place, it did not matter how good or enticing the vision was, because the future could not be folded back to the place where different imaginations of the CEOs were.
Both of these accounts of 'others' were taking place at about the same time and at a
time when 'T' was aware that there were expectations about it delivering something
new as an innovative model. While the attention and visibility of 'T' was something
that was embraced by all, being based on the passionate commitment and strategic
merit of specialist institutions, there was a fragility about wanting to do anything with
the association. The fact that 'T' was not yet robust enough to do this comes through
the data and was acknowledged in the HEFCE Evaluation Report, but any reluctance
expressed by members in the XYHE interviews appeared to be subordinated to the
'grand design' that it had been anticipated would either 'seduce' those who were less
enthusiastic, or at least appeal to their rational way of thinking. XYHE believed that
the rigorous approach that they put forward and the enhanced chances of success
under the Strategic Development Fund would appeal to the whole of 'T' and the built
in opportunity of as they put it 'wagon trains journeying across the prairie, allowing
people to stop off and settle along the trail, while others continued across the prairie'
would permit forward movement. However, they underestimated the power of the
minority to stall such plans.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As a practitioner researcher, the approach adopted in this chapter is to present the findings and analysis from the account in Chapter 8. This draws on the data generated over the three year period of the research and through the researcher’s capacity as participant observer with unique access to research material, as well as through the ‘accounts of others’ – external agencies, who were independently reporting and commentating on ‘T’. The findings from the case study identify emerging issues and themes and the analysis will seek to discover patterns and relationships that exist in the unfolding process of ‘T’ collaborative management and follow the format adopted throughout this research according to the dimensions of ‘policy’, ‘people’ and ‘process’.

2.0 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS ON THE POLICY CONTEXT

The data generated from the account helps to locate ‘T’s contribution as an academic consortium within the UK policy context and to provide some indicators as to the external factors that influenced the growth of academic consortia – the essence of the first research sub-question in this thesis. Figure 15 shows a summary of the principal contextual factors, the emerging themes and an interpretation that can be derived from the data in the account. These are developed in the subsequent discussion relating to the policy context in higher education based on themes that are identified and highlighted in the account.

The contextual factors pertinent to a consideration of the data on the higher education policy dimension include those of constant, unpredictable and pervasive change in the policy dynamic and the attendant intense government interest in UK higher education; the emergent quasi-market; competition (which according to Gibbons [1998, 2001] is founded upon collaboration and the creativity of the collaborative group with which organisations are associated); and the advent of the regional agenda in UK higher education. These factors and the associated literatures that explain and underpin the policy background have been considered in the policy literature chapter (Chapter 5) and looked at via different levels: starting with the pressures emanating from global competition in higher education, the UK policy...
dynamic, through to pressures for making the case for the strategic merit of small specialist higher education institutions. These form the backdrop against which more specific themes such as the incentivisation of collaborative activity by HEFCE, the role of politics, positioning and power in the policy context, and reconfiguration of the higher education institutional landscape can be identified.

FIGURE 15: MAIN FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS FROM THE POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 HEFCE INCENTIVISATION

From the earliest discussions about the emergence of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills Project and the conduct of 'T' business, the importance and centrality of HEFCE in the plans for 'T' was evident. HEFCE's ability to incentivise collaborative efforts through special initiative funding had played a significant part in both thinking about the formation and operations of 'T'. The proximity of 'T' to both government and HEFCE strategic agendas was seen to be an advantage and a disadvantage by its internal membership and the fact that not all had the same level of commitment to the sustainability of the consortium was noted by external commentators (see, for example page 256, 'T' Case Study as Part of the HEFCE
Evaluation of Collaboration in the Higher Education Sector). It was observed by me that the relationship of 'T' with HEFCE and what had started as a dialogue within the Policy Group at the beginning of its association, had by the end of this research, divided into two distinct camps. There were those CEOs who:

1. had reserves about the closeness of the relationship with HEFCE;
2. actively cultivated and embraced the 'ears and eyes' of HEFCE.

The first camp can best be summarised as those CEOs who saw 'T' as a 'creature' of HEFCE. This was perceived as requiring a cautious approach because of the danger of an implicit surrender of some of the treasured institutional autonomy of specialist institutions. It can be illustrated through those CEOs who spoke about a price to pay for 'taking the King's shilling', i.e. a particular view that HEFCE would not have granted the pump-priming money for 'T' unless it was to their strategic advantage. For them, the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project might be a case, as in Greek mythology, of Icarus and his wax wings flying too close to the sun. At the first residential CEO Workshop of the project (see Chapter 8, page 207) it was noted that the different dimensions of the strategic rationale of 'T' had to be weighed against some of the possible expectations of HEFCE. Periodically, throughout the research continued reservations were expressed about the nature of HEFCE's interest in 'T' (escalating to a 'need' in the view of some members) as a model of collaboration and cooperation. It was also evident in the modelling by metaphor exercise undertaken at the CEO Residential Workshop. One group initially depicted HEFCE as an almost sinister force and omnipresence in a solar system akin to 'Starwars', before reconsidering and placing 'T' as a central force using gravity to attract the member specialist institutions.

In contrast, the second camp comprised those champions within 'T' who saw the consortium as an innovative and sophisticated mechanism or game plan to ensure small specialist member institutional survival in the 21st century and as a strategy to offset the potential 'vulnerability' of their institutions. Those CEOs relished the opportunity to have a more robust and complementary platform from which to operate and the policy dynamic appeared to act as a constant force and reminder for forward momentum. Early contextualisation of the possibilities of 'T' within the turbulent HE sector (skilfully set out by the Chair of 'T') created a sense of urgency. Past achievement from individual institutions was used as both a platform and showcase to help 'lever' success in competitive bidding rounds. These strategies very quickly took hold and operated effectively to embed the consortium as a 'going
concern’. It was felt that, similarly, the incoming HEFCE CEO was supportive of 'T' and prepared to champion its forward movement, although it was made very clear via conversations with the Regional Consultant that HEFCE was looking to 'T' as a model of collaboration. In the modelling by metaphor workshops, two groups depicted HEFCE as a positive presence, but the focus was on what the institutions could do to indicate their 'distinctiveness' to the Funding Council.

While in the first flush of success of the consortium, the two viewpoints were not to pose a problem over the duration of the project the existence of these two 'dialogues' escalated to become more of a tension. This took hold and shaped a divide in 'T's constituency, surfacing periodically as a block to substantive discussions and ultimately, acted as a factor that would contribute in a significant way to block 'risk taking' and a more public commitment to investigating the possibility of a 'University of the Arts' for 'T. The facilitation of opposing views was one of the advantages of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project, where in the CEO workshops an additional resource was provided in the form of the project facilitator who would tease out and unblock different view points that left unaided could quite quickly assume the status of tensions and escalate to a more permanent 'blockage.'

At the deliberation stage of whether a consortium of specialist art and design institutions should be formed (March - December 1998) the concept of 'T' was worked through with HEFCE at the highest level. The business proposal at the then HEFCE CEO's suggestion (Sir Brian Fender) was worked on jointly with the HEFCE Regional Consultant for the South East with resultant funding and support for both 'T's formation and two initial projects under the Restructuring and Collaboration Fund.

There had been some five meetings of the Executives of 'T' institutions prior to 'T's formation, two of them with HEFCE officers in attendance. The fundamental importance of HEFCE involvement was always understood, therefore, by the founder members. The 'T' agenda as set out in the Heads of Agreement (see Appendix 2) closely attuned to the policy platforms that contenders for the impending position of HEFCE Chief Executive were rehearsing and articulating for the sector. Before it was clear that Sir Howard Newby would take up the position of HEFCE CEO, his input into the sector was being carefully watched by 'T' as a well-known advocate and self-confessed champion of strategic alliances, consortia and mergers in the context of global competition, and corporate cost-effectiveness. He often referred to
his experiences of the Wisconsin model and was known as the author of the phrase 'there are too many universities' - a spur for 'T' to think creatively about how to secure individual institutional futures. At the end of the account in his keynote speech to the fourth 'T' Annual Conference (April 2002) despite denying there was a 'Newby Plan', Sir Howard Newby referred to some fairly basic principles which while not controversial in themselves, could prove to be controversial in their working through to a logical conclusion.

'T's formation had been 'sold' to the HEFCE as a potential exportable model to the sector for small specialist institutions, offering a possible solution about what to do with small specialist colleges of any discipline, and one that could reflect the growing trend in higher education of engaging in new and innovative forms of collaborative relationships short of merger. The 'very interesting and innovative proposal' of 'T' was thus based on a very personal relationship with the outgoing Chief Executive of HEFCE (Sir Brian Fender) and one that was to be continued with the incoming Chief Executive (Sir Howard Newby) who took up the position in 2000. On more than one public occasion 'T' was described as an 'elegant model' (Crossley: 1999, 2000, 2001) and a solution to the conundrum of what the Funding Council should do with small specialist institutions in the current political and economic context of UK higher education, while at the same time preserving and promoting diversity in the sector and the contributions that small 'excellent' institutions could make. This was the policy platform on which the Policy Group wished to make their case - not because 'diversity' was impossible in larger HEIs, but because they were 'wedded to' and 'passionate about' the notion of delivery of arts, design and communication in the specialist institutional setting.

The importance to 'T' of success in the Good Management Practice initiative in late 1999 and early 2000 was as a project that would align with the 'stall it had set out for itself'. The extreme importance of the success in this area, as stressed by the Chair of the 'T' Policy Group, was illustrated by some of the discussion narrated in the account (page 177):

...there has to be a strong response and evidence the focus of a consortium already in operation and developing good co-operative management practices......

and

1 A phrase used by the HEFCE SE Regional Consultant at the 'T' Collaborative Management Conference (2002) and recorded in 'T' Collaborative Management: Lessons Learnt (2002) page 51
However, success in bidding was not the only strategic aim of the consortium. Throughout the account of the three year period there are numerous references to bidding, as well as being seen to bid. This together with the cyclical effect of celebrating successes in funding rounds ranging from Widening Participation through Developing Good Management Practice to Foundation Degrees and value for money studies such as collective work on Joint Costing and Practice (for example, see Chapter 8, page 194 reviewing 'T' success at the first ‘Strategic Planning Away Day' in May 2000 and setting the scene for a Foundation Degree Prototype proposal) acted as an early measure of success. The 'T' Policy Group were always, however, anxious to emphasise the ‘voluntary' and ‘organic' nature of their association that predated the onset of the plethora of special initiative funding (see page 193). There are many instances from the Heads of Agreement itself, through to self-reflection in Strategic Planning Away-Days and Developing Collaborative Management CEO workshops as well as on external occasions where the common platform of 'T' was feted as: 'the pre-eminence of the small specialist centre as a shaper of subject and ambassador for the discipline” (page 203) and the counter argument of 'T' existing merely to gain extra funds: "..cynics in new membership perceive our model as primarily one of a bidding mechanism. This is not so!" (Chapter 8: page 204)

The debate as to whether HEFCE was a planning or purely a funding body gathered momentum during the period of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. Despite HEFCE's constant reassertion that it was not a planning body, it was inevitable that its own strategic planning and funding streams reflected many different government priorities and factors ranging from fair access and participation through to quality, enhanced productivity and value for money. The HEFCE Regional Consultant and official observer of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project, speaking at the cumulative conference of the project in February 2002, noted that HEFCE inevitably was a bit of both a funding and planning organisation.² His view was that the Funding Council was trying to increase and incentivise various forms of collaboration right across the sector and that HEFCE's role (seen as crucial) was one of facilitation. He pronounced that the collaborative context "provides an opportunity for critical mass whilst maintaining distinctiveness and diversity" and he

also pointed out that collaboration for the Funding Council was not a code for ‘merger’.

It was therefore clear that HEFCE’s role in nurturing academic consortia would be on a voluntary basis through inter-institutional co-operation and collaboration and through competitive bidding. From HEFCE’s perspective the ideal, would be for a voluntary transformation of the HE system that could manifest itself in institutional plans, in evidence of resource sharing, rationalisation, capacity building and avoidance of unnecessary duplication. Sir Howard Newby in his keynote speech at the ‘T’ Conference in April 2002 again referred to the fact that:

...nor will you find that I am going to press mergers on unwilling partners. I have no doubt that close collaboration and sometimes merger will be appropriate, but that will be for individual institutions to conclude for themselves. Where they do come to that conclusion, then I think they should be able to look to HEFCE to smooth the way to enable that to happen. But we will certainly not be imposing on this.

The account illustrates that there was a recognition and acknowledgement on HEFCE’s part, that institutions are independent entities and that they should be encouraged to make their own decisions about their futures. Similarly the statement about the fundamental importance of retaining institutions’ corporate independence (made by the Chair of ‘T’: page 204) and balancing this with an unfolding realisation that over the period of research:

"...some of that precious independence might have to be surrendered in order to pursue a collaborative model to preserve each specialist institution in the longer term..."

illustrates the competing pressures on individuals within ‘T’. As the account suggests through various episodes recorded in the research, the reality of achieving and managing a sustainable collaborative despite its obvious attractions, was a journey that while not embarked upon lightly, appeared to underestimate the challenges of melding the agendas and maintaining the consortium. It became apparent over the period of the research that there would need to be a much longer term strategy than would first appear. The original aspirations of the Policy Group in the Heads of Agreement had been couched in quite definite terms, but often became diluted with a lesser outcome than previously anticipated. For example, in the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project proposal it was suggested that one deliverable would be ‘joint planning’ amongst the ‘T’ partners. However, what was achieved was the more modest step-change of the joint sharing of intentions of each other’s plans.

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Two other observations are of interest here: the first is to contrast and compare the University of Wisconsin System Administration, where on the visit to UW-Madison the Vice President of the System Administration noted with surprise that 'T' had achieved as much as it had in such a short time with only 'encouragement' from the Funding Council. He contrasted this with his experience of the growth of the Wisconsin System, which while now championed as a model of excellence of a federal system by UK and other higher education commentators, had taken thirty years to achieve a degree of comfort in working together. His point was, that in his opinion, the Wisconsin federal model would never have been achieved if the requirement for institutions to work together had been voluntary – it was only because the system was mandatory – passed by very few votes in the Wisconsin State legislature that it had made its slow, but steadfast progress. There was thus an element of policy compulsion underpinned by legislation behind the federal University of Wisconsin allowing it to grow and achieve a higher education system that would be able to compete in the US with other richer and more powerful institutions.

The second observation about HEFCE's incentivisation of collaborative management within 'T' was, that over the three year period, the more intense HEFCE's expectation became about an alternative model of collaboration, the more resistance appeared to be fuelled within the Policy Group to comply with the outcomes HEFCE might have anticipated. In the beginning the ability to command HEFCE's attention and work with their support was attractive and mutuality was achieved through 'T' winning bids. In turn, HEFCE's wish to be able to point to a model of specialist institutions working well together and using collaboration to achieve outcomes that no one institution could achieve on its own was of value to them. However, toward the end of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project the pressures on 'T' to deliver something innovative and unique - something that was a product of the 'glue' that held them together was intensely felt. In fact, as the account illustrates, getting at the 'glue' was very difficult, in part because of the changing dynamic around the institutions which was requiring each institutional leader to think strategically when nothing was certain and because of the differing imaginations that each CEO held for their institution – and in part the inability for them to be able to make 'T' work for their own paramount institutional interest.

Although the idea of a 'T' University of the Arts was one that was finally articulated in 2001 and 'T' agreement secured to proceed in deliberations about it, the enthusiasm with which the HEFCE Evaluation of the Restructuring and Collaboration Fund
embraced this, and the approach at about the same time by XYHE (who were known in the sector as champions of strategic alliances and federations of independent institutions joining in partnership that fell short of mergers) was not seen as coincidental and was perceived by some as pressure. It was felt that HEFCE’s interest in ‘T’ was behind the approach and served as an inhibitor of collaboration as opposed to a driver of collaboration.

2.2 POLITICS, POSITIONING AND POWER

A second theme emerging from the data generated in the research and not unrelated to the theme of HEFCE incentivisation was one of individual and collective institutional positioning and power. What was evident from the data in the case study was how politically astute ‘T’ set out to be, although ‘tailgating’ government and HEFCE agendas was not an aspiration or an approach shared by all in ‘T’. In analysing data on this theme, it is interesting to discover that very quickly there appeared to be two parallel tracks that individual members of the Policy Group were on: the first and foremost was that of creating ‘T’ and positioning it in the HE sector; and the second was that of loyalty to their own institution - preserving and positioning individual institutions within the changing system as a paramount priority. On occasions these intersected and caused a dilemma for members of the Policy Group. In observing this ‘fuzziness’ and the fact that CEOs as custodians of their institutions at any one time would be having to think along twin tracks (and it was not always apparent on which track they were on), each of which could at a moment’s notice either promote or inhibit institutional autonomy gave sharp focus to the work of the consortium.

Evidence from the account illustrates the complexity and non-linear progress in respect of politicking, positioning and exhibiting power relations – all of which contributed to ‘messiness in this research.’ There was a need to balance the attraction of specialist performing and creative arts institutions as a collective having the capacity to access funding opportunities and enhance visibility across a larger number of agendas. In forming a representative voice, being able to persuade and influence and generally achieving a measure of ‘punching above their weight’ this had to be measured against the perceived consequences of putting one’s head above the parapet as an innovative model. ‘T’ was entering into a web of conflicting pressures and mixed messages and one where the practice of sharing power and influence might not be as attractive as it sounded in theory.
The requirement for individual 'T' CEOs to be astute in engaging with the agendas in order to gain institutional advantage and to further the interests of 'T' was evidenced at various points in the account: from instances of lobbying for specialism, through to promoting diversity, making the case to defend the HEFCE weighted funded premium as well as the big stated ideal of providing an alternative to the merger culture through formulating something different and pioneering - an exportable model of collaboration. It was evident that HEFCE had an agenda for collaboration but at that time gave minimal support because of the 'voluntary' nature of the association set up by 'autonomous' institutions. From the perspective of the institutions, however, it can be seen that for some there was a fear of the implications of the agendas that they had taken on and the potential instead of being a site for cooperation and collaboration to be one for a subtle power struggle.

Some interesting insights into perspective on the perceived politics, position and power of the 'T' institutions were succinctly put by the two members of the Policy Group on their visit to the University of Wisconsin. Professor Close's description of the UK higher education context to the Vice President of the System Administration as a “system you would never invent” and as a “nightmare system” with small institutions “hanging on the coat tails of big institutions” as well as the fact that funding methodologies were driven by larger institutions (Chapter 8, page186).

2.3 THE RECONFIGURATION OF THE HE LANDSCAPE

There are many examples in the account that demonstrate 'T's policy awareness of the shifting 'tectonic plates' in the sector. Within the Policy Group there was a constant discussion and updating of how best 'T' could respond in the short term to immediate challenges and opportunities and how the increased influence of HEFCE's role as a planning and steering body (something much greater than in the past) could relate to 'T' and be harnessed to maximum effect. The alignment of individual institutional agendas and funnelling them through 'T' as a collective voice appeared at one level to be increasingly attractive. The formal bringing together of 'T' CEOs as the Policy Group afforded a unique opportunity to combine their competences to facilitate, negotiate and collaborate in an increasingly competitive and contentious political environment. However, their rationale for doing this rested along a continuum of views from ones such as that expressed by the HEFCE CEO that "the structure of British higher education is now considerably out of line with its newly acquired
functions and purpose" (Newby: 2001) through to the view that UK higher education comprises a collection of small and largely competing businesses that need to recognise the importance of the sharing of best practice, economies of scale and a realisation of business excellence in order to survive and compete effectively.

The first view suggested the UK higher education system was unstable, undercapitalised and over-trading and one where the 'T' model with its critical mass, the opportunity of economies of scale, the ability to lever resources, engagement in systems thinking, (including analytical and critical thinking processes), visioning of potential futures, strategic and tactical assessment as well as communication and change dynamics could all act as powerful reasons for its association from the policy perspective. However, as can be seen from the account, while there were incremental (and superficial successes) through bidding rounds that served to intensify and escalate collaborative relations, the 'grand design' was increasingly difficult to articulate and translate into practice. At this point in the research it can be identified that there was a 'multiplex' of agendas, with each complex in its own right as well as more exponentially complex in the collaborative setting. This necessitated juggling agendas and perspectives on the part of each CEO both in an institutional capacity and collectively as a member of 'T'.

The theme of regionalism underpinned the formation of 'T' in the first place and continued as a driver for consortium activity throughout the period of research. Both 'T' and the emerging Regional Development Agencies were closely linked in terms of their chronology. With the advent of Regional Development Agencies (1998) it can be seen that there was both an a priori expectation of regional institutional collaboration (as advocated in the Dearing Report) that was facilitated by emerging regional associations of higher education institutions (e.g. Higher Education South East (HESE), South West Higher Education Regional Development Agency (SWHERDA), London Higher Education Consortium (LHEC)). 'T' was fully aware and anticipated that regionalism would parallel and provide a steer for much of its activity and advantage in its formation and operation. It is interesting that during 'T's formation stage the original four institutions thought that they would be within one distinct geographical region and described themselves in the proposal to HEFCE in 1998 as a regional association of specialist art, design and communication institutions in the south east. As HEFCE drew its regional boundaries aping the nine designated UK regions, it transpired that the 'T' institutional membership was distributed in the London, South East and South West regions. There had to be a reformulation of 'T'
as a conjoint regional association operating in southern England and this again raised 'trust issues' that the Regional Development Agencies would themselves be having conjoint discussions in the spirit of economic success rather than the stance of protectionism and inter-regional competition.

During the period of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project many regional institutional mergers took place and close alliances were formed that confirmed and increased the concerns for the survival of specialist institutions in the sector: for example Bretton Hall College was subsumed by Leeds University, there was a merger between London Guildhall University and the University of North London, a formal federal alliance between Leeds Metropolitan and the University of Bradford (later to collapse), an alliance between the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA) and the London School of Contemporary Dance (to be called the London Dance and Drama Conservatoire). The Chair of 'T' acerbically noted that the latter came into being:

...having the blessing of HEFCE and preferential funding to go with it. One hears rumours of other imminent mergers and we can have little doubt that within London there will be a reshaping of the University landscape before too long. The new Vice Chancellor of Kent has published his manifesto in the Times Higher Education Supplement and that too, is one of the regionally distributed University, with Kent University as the organisational hub.

Presentation to the Council of Church Colleges, September 2001

Regional hegemonies were therefore helped by the establishment of the Regional Development Agencies whose agendas seemed to be developing a protectionism about their educational provision. This can be seen in the account at the HESE Vice Chancellor’s Forum, where what appeared to be witnessed was a regional association, (HESE), wishing to capture those 'T' partners within its region along with the inter-corporate success of the enterprise, while rejecting a full place at its table for the whole of the 'T' membership. This presented a difficulty for the consortium in finding a way through, and posed the question – to what extent should physical geography as opposed to ethical and subject connectivity be a guiding factor in the formation of joint initiatives?

Throughout the period of the research the policy backdrop in relation to regionalism contributed to a growing sensation of a London Group and a Southern Regional Group and the emerging strength of the South West Region was also to play its part in tugging at the loyalty of the member located there. The policy backdrop existed as an underlying tension that both tugged at and fractured the loyalty of an otherwise
cognate group of specialist institutions. Regionalism remained a political issue that could be time consuming and absorbing and for groups of institutions contemplating a more formally structured relationship the consideration of regional issues is one that has to be addressed with great care.

Later in the Developing Collaborative Management Skills Project as the pressure for models of successful innovation through collaboration increased in order to be able to "continue the success of the HE system while introducing the changes needed to maintain our pre-eminent position" (Newby (2002) 'T' Conference) the Policy Group wrestled with the common purpose that the seven institutions could find to sustain the association. It emerged during the research that not only issues of regionalism, but the combination of art and design institutions and performing arts HEIs was problematic. Instead of simply offering an espoused opportunity of building on complementarity, there emerged, in fact, difficulties when faced with competing diverse functions of teaching undergraduates and postgraduates, carrying out world-class research, engaging in technology transfer in the industry, providing services to local and regional business, acting as key players in the local community and as agents of social integration and change.

2.4 INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS FROM THE POLICY CONTEXT

From the consideration of themes in this section it can be seen that assessing the environment in the context of alliance collaboration and its inter-relationship with people and process issues is important. The relationship and the degree of mutuality sought between 'T' and HEFCE was evident from the outset of the account. 'T' could demonstrably act as a model to evaluate UK higher education's readiness and capacity in respect of institutional collaborative relationships. Watson noted in posing the question 'Can we be equal and excellent, too?' (2001) that HEFCE had an aspiration to promote alliance and mergers between higher education institutions through carrot and stick funding mechanisms. His conclusion was that there might be little option but for the sector to seek a reduction in the range and typology of institutions if government continued to pursue, through various funding pressures, overarching compliance to its core agenda. What the account in Chapter 8 illustrated was the enticing prospect for 'T' of being financially supported by HEFCE (no overt 'sticks', although the phrase 'something for something' was very much in the minds of all members of 'T') and a bidding environment that positively encouraged
collaboration. It was noted by Crossley on one occasion (2001) that there certainly appeared ‘enough carrots to satisfy even the greediest of donkeys’.

Working with the grain of the growing trend and acceptance of the phrase in higher education that there are too many universities, ‘T’ employed ‘push-pull’ strategies to both learn more about collaboration at the same time as capitalising on the growth of ‘T’. While in the beginning it was relatively easy to do this bringing home quick wins, capturing the essence of what the consortium was trying to do and evidencing it became more complex toward the end of the project. This can be seen at Policy Group workshops and in the residentials from June 2001 through to January 2002, reaching almost a crescendo and fever pitch prior to the Collaborative Management Conference in February 2002 and the ‘T’ Annual Conference in April 2002, where the formal account ended. By this time the complex mêlée of delivering outcomes that could be used by HEFCE as a collaborative model of success were pressing, together with the internal pressures and responsibilities of a growing infrastructure, increased interest in ‘T’s work and the corresponding expectations about its next strategic moves. The long awaited White Paper on higher education futures had still not emerged and collaboration as a panacea to some of the complex stresses and strains facing the sector was still very much a ‘live’ issue.

The collective intent of ‘T’ as expressed in the memorandum of agreement was both soft and ambitious and drawn widely to hone in and benefit from the policy and legislative framework. The question arises about how far it was aspirational? Ranging from valuing diversity within the further and higher education sectors, to promoting the recognition and reputation of individual institutions in delivering ‘excellent’ learning, teaching, scholarship, research and professional practice as well as enhancing opportunities through larger critical mass and the significant and distinct contribution (individual and collective) of specialist institutions, gave ‘T’ a large territory to cover and in which to make its mark. The aim of a focus for effective engagement with key regional, national and international agencies, consortia and funding sources as well as maximising participation in the region of key economic, social, cultural and environmental strategies were larger agendas for ‘T’ and in danger of becoming unwieldy, when the very agendas themselves were emergent and there was instability in the sector. The ‘T’ exploration of a strategic logic pointed to it as small, specialist and vulnerable and set the scene for it to be innovative and not risk averse. However, much of the account points to differing individual interpretations of what individual CEOs could gain and its relationship to the Policy

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that ended up being surmised as one where institutions had joined the association to retain independence rather than to give some of that independence up.

3.0 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS ON THE PEOPLE CONTEXT

FIGURE 16: MAIN FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF PEOPLE CONTEXT

The findings in the research suggest a number of factors that indicate the attraction of 'T' to individual members of the Policy Group. These contribute to an understanding of how and why the consortium and the concept of collaboration management took hold and grew. Whether or not the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project became totally embedded as a concept and influenced practice or just rested on the surface of the consortium as a 'project within a project' is another interesting avenue that can be explored through the data generated. In fact, the pivotal nature of the project was recognised by the Chair and some other members of 'T' both as a barometer of being able to escalate collaborative relations or dash strategic intents and ambitions. For example the Chair noted on external platforms (e.g. Cooperation and Collaboration Conference (2001); Council of Church Colleges Conference, Collaborating for Distinctiveness, (2001)) that issues of trust, mutuality and shared purpose as components of a successful enterprise were tested through the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project.

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The overall context for the 'people' dimension (i.e. the CEO collaborative leadership context as explored in this research) is one of change in an organisational climate categorised as one moving from a relatively stable and benign higher education environment to one that was complex and chaotic. There was an attendant shift from traditional forms of hierarchical leadership to collaborative models, and one which the 'T' Policy Group made a feature of their association through attracting funding and tackling head-on the HEFCE Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. Additionally, the Policy Group's perceived need to explore new skills and competencies that would be required by CEOs in the shift from autonomous management of their institutions to managing collaboratively through a consortium ensured that this project was of interest within the sector, both in the UK and elsewhere.

The principal themes that emerged from the account focused on the CEO skills of building vision, managing change and collaborative competencies including communication, team/group leadership skills, management competencies and those relating to political and legal dimensions. Within the research these capacities had the double meaning of being both learnt about as well as the 'how to' in practising them. Thus it can be evaluated how far the knowledge conjoined with performance based on that knowledge developed the skill or capacity of the CEOs as the Policy Group.

3.1 BUILDING VISION

The theme of building and envisioning the future featured prominently in the account. This included what Kouzes and Posner termed 'imagining the ideal' and 'intuiting the future' (Kouzes and Posner, 1995:94) and required a combination of a future focus, melding the strategic intents of individual CEOs and the practical activity of 'doing what needs to be done' (Bennis & Nanus: 1985). For 'T' this included seeking visibility as a 'going concern', a focus on the future and its exhibition of core values, exploiting, sharing and embedding the vision through decision making efforts as well as its implementation. There are a number of examples from the account that illustrate Bryman's (1992) suggestion of vision formation skills required from leaders: i.e. communicating the vision, organisational empowerment of the vision, the ability to align the organisational culture with the vision and nurturing trust as change is implemented (1992:146-147).
Frequent references were made in the account to the mission laid out in the Heads of Agreement when bidding for funds and through succinctly pointing to ‘T’s history, mission and values’. It can be seen that there was no shortage of opportunities for ‘T’ to engage as a consortium in the sector and as demonstrated at the first formal Policy Group Meeting (March 1999, ‘T’ planned to show through public mechanisms of competitive bidding that it was ‘open for business’ and could capitalise on the by-product of funding application through ‘showcasing its wares’. This was not only evidenced through shaping a bid, but also by being able to reach out to peer organisations and create a sense of inter-dependency and build capacity. One example referred to in the account where this was skilfully employed related to the emerging Learning and Teaching Subject Network (ADC-LTSN) where ‘T’ was active in playing a part in shaping its proposal to be part of the LTSN and was referenced as a part of it. Another example where enhanced leverage was obtained through harnessing associations and lending support to other proposals, was with HESDA, the then Higher Education Staff Developing Association and with SCOP and the MASHEIN projects where mutual ‘naming’ of each other’s support in bids was incorporated under the HEFCE Developing Good Management Practice initiative.

Using the vision to attract the attention of regional, national and international players – being invited to and responding to Regional Vice Chancellors’ Fora, presentations at national conferences on ‘Collaboration and Cooperation’ and both going to and attracting speakers back representing the University of Wisconsin - empowered and endorsed ‘T’ as a model of success and with the ability to ‘punch above its weight’. From an external perspective the apparent alignment of the organisational culture with the vision set out for ‘T’ was ostensibly seamless, the open approach adopted by the Policy Group was one of advocacy and ambassadorial diplomacy reflecting the shared journey of ‘T’ and its unfolding history.

However, as the account has shown whilst the ambition of ‘T’ to act to enhance the external profile of members and to give a stronger voice with which to champion the ‘distinctiveness’ of specialist provision and represent members’ interests was being achieved, the fundamental internal debate with its focus on the purpose of ‘T’, its guiding rationale and discussions about the ‘glue’ that was holding it together were proving to be more challenging questions. During the course of the account, the centrality of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project in facilitating this question, and seeking the ‘true strategic intent’ of ‘T’ (apart from the rhetoric) was
to be of paramount importance, a constant recurrent theme, an iterative process and one that remained inconclusive at the end of the research period.

The ability to secure and be absolutely clear about a shared imagination for the strategic development of 'T' was to prove elusive. On numerous occasions (e.g. the first Policy Group Meeting, March 1999; the first Strategic Planning Day, May 2000; the first, and subsequent Developing Collaborative Management project residential of November 2000, April 2001, June 2001, January 2002) this question of what was the shared purpose of 'T' was returned to as both key to and as an indicator of collaborative success. Even when considering whether 'T' could shape itself around a University of the Arts, as well as at the culminating Collaborative Management: Lessons Learnt Conference in February 2002 and the fourth 'T' Annual Conference (April 2002) with the HEFCE Chief Executive as keynote speaker, this fundamental issue was skirted around. Perhaps, therefore, this is a finding in itself that 'T' could not find an overarching common shared purpose that was robust and could be signed up to. The process of building the vision for a set of cognate and aligned institutions became a purpose in itself.

In the account it can be seen that many common denominators were identified and much sharing and learning took place about the reasons for 'T's existence. This happened within routine Policy Group meetings where the question was returned to as a platform for moving business forward and through reflection in the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project itself. These common denominators included an understanding of the potential benefits and the 'wins' from collaboration for all participating institutions, the shared logic that all 'T' members were small, specialist and vulnerable in the shifting policy dynamic and that together their critical mass allowed for a greater degree of risk taking and innovation. Despite this, however, while 'T' had seized the imagination of external audiences, the multiplex of moving internal challenges and the balancing and off-setting of these for 'T' CEOs mitigated against a definitive 'next stage' formal grouping. The backdrop of an uncertain and ambiguous policy context remained and while 'wins' in the short term were being secured the question for the CEOs was whether the 'T' grouping of specialist institutions was robust enough to be sustainable in the current climate or could it easily be driven back to collaboratively being defensive.

Among the seven institutions there were a plethora of differences and complexities that needed to be accommodated, and in part this was added to with shift of 'T' from
initially a pure art and design consortium, to one that included the performing arts. It can be seen that in April 2001 at the start of the third year of the project (Table 21, page 223) the main responses given to the question 'what does my institution want from 'T' from the six institutions present elicited evenly split responses between those who were still seeing 'T' as a defence to the ferocious external environment and those who saw it as an innovative and unique opportunity for 'T' to go forward and position itself and to achieve what they could not achieve on their own. A fundamental tenet was that 'T' strategy would be different, but that it needed to be understood in terms of the strategies of each of the individual participants. Only where 'T' could identify and 'add value' to individual institutions, that is where there was mutuality, would the vision become firmly embedded.

By September 2001 the high visibility of 'T', with the concomitant pressure to clarify its purpose and mission internally and the need to accommodate stakeholder interest to match expectations, served as a reinvigorating factor to try and achieve consensus and 'buy-in' on an agreed way forward. A series of high level strategic meetings were agreed but the dialectic of stakeholder interest and activity meant that the Policy Group were not able to address their ‘vision’ against a static backdrop. Instead new possibilities that they were unable to ignore had to be factored in.

3.2 MANAGING CHANGE

In order for 'T' to become an effective change agent, the members of the Policy Group needed a constellation of skills that included, but were not limited to, analytical skills, the ability to share leadership roles and problem solving processes, critical thinking, systems understanding, consensus and credibility building, collaborative inquiry, risk calculation and risk taking (Kanter 1989; Wright et al 2000). Kotter has suggested that leadership "is about coping with change" (Kotter 1990:103) and requires energising behaviour to move through inevitable barriers. For 'T' part of this world of change had to be achieved through formulating its strategic intent and sustaining a shared vision, and an understanding of the processes of change and collaborative processes that might underpin it.

Leveraging resources is one example of a change agent through collaborative activity. Other key questions about how sustainable change occurs and can be measured through consortium activity relates to whether one measures success as institutional, consortial or collaborative? One area from the narrative that illustrates
success is where 'T' achieved additional student numbers and the leveraging of support through the overarching letter sent by 'T' to support the HEFCE annual bidding round. This allowed growth, enabled the key national priorities of widening access to higher education, increased opportunities for students and provision below honours degree level, as well as supporting expansion of high quality in learning and teaching. The ASN example demonstrates gain where there was a minimum of teamwork but where the very existence of the consortium and the letter from the Chair to HEFCE indicating that the sharing of institutional ASNs had been a matter of joint planning in order to avoid duplication of provision, brought material reward.

Table 21 (Chapter 8: page 220) sets out the institutional positions when ‘grappling with a strategic intent for ‘T’ and indicated the importance of ‘T’ as a mechanism for managing change for many of its membership. Among other things institutions referred to ‘T’s benefit in terms of staff development, being able to exploit what was timely and to capitalise on the collaborative agenda. The sharing of activities and knowledge at all levels of the organisations, the idea of ‘not having to go it alone’ in the current climate, the opportunities to be exploited in terms of research and subject enhancement as well as opportunities to collectively craft distinctiveness and differentiation were all positive instances of managing change. While this table summarised institutional ‘wish lists’ from ‘T’ it also set out the ‘added value’ and anticipated gains for the future. It highlights the fact that substantive change in a climate of ambiguity and uncertainty was very much at the forefront of the individual members of the Policy Group’s minds and illustrated how ‘T’ as a tightly knit group of actors could perform specialised differentiated and complementary roles in moving the organisation in a desired direction.

3.3 COLLABORATIVE COMPETENCIES

The account affords many examples of how respective collaborative competencies of the CEOs came together to support the concept of collaborative management. It was necessary for the ‘T’ CEOs collectively to start to think and work across boundaries of their own institutions and to build and accomplish collaborative visions through joint goal setting and active pursuit of those goals. The ‘forming’ stage of the Policy Group with (initially) four institutional leaders acting as collaborative pioneers moved quite cautiously and sensitively in 1999, and although prior to the first formal meeting as a Policy Group the CEOs had met together informally, the business of translating the mission, aims and objectives set out in the Heads of Agreement was laid out
clearly for them to follow in year 1 (see Appendix 2, Heads of Agreement, paras 1.1 – 1.3).

The objectives for the first year of 'T' included developing its identity, an external communications strategy, projecting a 'T' view where appropriate, establishing relations with key regional players (particularly the Regional Development Agencies and selected national agencies) and establishing a website. Internal communications objectives included the holding of joint seminars, training and development events, the formation of initial task and networking groups to share information and to build collaborative approaches as well as using the website to post key documents, publicise events and achievements in order to 'connect' people. More importantly a penultimate priority expressed in the Heads of Agreement was the need to:-

Begin to share information in relation to planned academic developments and appropriate market research and market data

From the account it can be seen that all of these were approached with energy and enthusiasm and 'quick wins' were achieved more easily than might have been anticipated, together with success in embedding an awareness of 'T' in the regional and national agendas. However, the belief that bringing together appropriate people in constructive ways with good information on its own, would automatically enable them to create authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the organisation or community (Chrislip & Larson, 1994:) would not be sufficient to sustain a collaborative entity. Continual support and nourishment of leadership practices or competencies to do this are crucial and great care was taken in Policy Group to do this, and the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project was devised as an extra aid to this process. One of the key skills in alliance management is not just that of managing the content or context of collaboration, but is one of strong leadership of the process – for example, keeping stakeholders at the table through periods of frustration and scepticism. This, the Chair did by acknowledging 'T' successes along the way, helping stakeholders negotiate difficult points (facilitated by the external consultant at the workshops and at key points where it appeared an 'impasse' might be approaching) as well as through reinforcing group norms and ground rules.

In the account, much was made of 'the process cycle' and this was acknowledged at the 'T' Collaborative Management Conference where the Chair spoke about the evolutionary stages of collaborative management as being akin to courtship through
to marriage. This reflected a five stage process from informal relations, to coordination, to partnerships, to collaboration and finally to integration and with each stage necessitating more complex leadership skills and a corresponding increase in impact on the broader constituencies. At the ‘T’ Collaborative Management Conference in February 2002, Professor Jules Pope in facilitating the workshop ‘From engagement to marriage – planning, process and structure in collaboration, or ‘I wouldn’t start from here if I were you’ explained where he thought ‘T’ had got to at that point. While the stages of ‘eyeing each other up in the playground’, ‘going out together’, ‘going steady’ ‘travelling through the period of pre-marital honeymoon’ and ‘having the odd testing break-up and a bit of infidelity’ had been successfully negotiated (and indeed the Conference itself confirmed the a move from point five to point six, see Table 26, below) and the journey to ‘integration’ would be the next challenge:

> We within ‘T’ do face the challenges from a position of enhanced strength. We know we are on a journey. We now have a sense of direction, we are beginning to shape a strategy, we are reviewing our internal modus and looking at our management structures across ‘T’, and we are beginning to evaluate what kind of concordat might be suitable to take us to our next stopping off point.

(CADISE Collaborative Management: Lessons Learnt, 2002:62)

The approach by XYHE to ‘T’ to map future strategic opportunities for ‘T’ was acknowledged by Professor Pope in positive terms in this workshop. He drew parallels with the European Union in its role of (2002:63).

> ...protecting the integrity of the member states remains the priority across the whole of Europe, but those with a vision for Europe (Germans and French) maintain that unless closer federation occurs, the trust values of partnership fail to materialise and member states occupy positions that are adjacent to the whole – ultimately looking only for individual added material benefit, rather than seeking to occupy the high ground in global enterprise and social equity

> I think it would be reasonable to suggest that nation states can share a single vision and still retain national integrities. But this cannot be achieved without some give and take, and perhaps, most importantly, not without a willingness to share the idea of a global mission.

(Crossley, 2002:63)

The table below indicates what had been achieved by the time this research ended. Each approach necessitated more complex skills and this leads to the observation that the deeper the relations embarked upon, the more complicated the process of collaborative management became.
TABLE 26: LIFE CYCLE PROCESS MODEL OF 'T'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A LIFE CYCLE PROCESS</th>
<th>T's SELF-ASSESSMENT MODEL</th>
<th>LEADERSHIP SKILLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INFORMAL RELATIONS</td>
<td>1. Eyeing each other up in the playground</td>
<td>Making the case for collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>√ Achieved</td>
<td></td>
<td>Building the vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Going out together</td>
<td>Assessing inter-personal relations and trust issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO-ORDINATION</td>
<td>3. Going steady</td>
<td>Spectre of collaboration as a change agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Putting in place infrastructure and mechanisms for collaborative activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Beginning to chase the agendas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Harnessing and harvesting institutional and human capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>√ Achieved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTNERSHIP</td>
<td>4. Travelling through the pre-marital honeymoon</td>
<td>Building institutional capacity and capability – levelling the playing field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>√ Achieved</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ensuring ‘quick wins’ and mutuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLABORATION</td>
<td>5. Having the odd testing break-up and a bit of infidelity</td>
<td>Managing perceptions and misunderstandings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>√ Partial Achievement – easier for some 'T' members than others</td>
<td></td>
<td>Keeping Stakeholders at the table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Maturing into a balanced view of how life could be together</td>
<td>Managing ‘non-exclusive’ relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Visioning the commitment, escalating the relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTEGRATION</td>
<td>7. Getting engaged, implies a wedding</td>
<td>Making the personal commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X Not yet achieved</td>
<td>8. Announcing the wedding</td>
<td>Public acknowledgement of the impending integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Doing it</td>
<td>Making it happen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Having children</td>
<td>Happily ever after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISINTEGRATION</td>
<td>11. Getting divorced</td>
<td>Not a necessary consequence, but it may happen with changing times.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.1 COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES

Within the account it can be seen that as the complexity of issues escalated, so did the requirements for communication. While in theory the number of face-to-face interactions increased communication, it was felt that this would not have happened without the Developing Collaborative Management Skills programme that kept CEOs at the table, and under an obligation to HEFCE to complete the project. The modes of practice of communication varied on the part of the group, ranging from: writing and public speaking (mostly, but not exclusively on the part of the Chair), a variety of forms of group dialogue, from the formal within the constraints of the project and in Policy Group, to informal social interactions in smaller groups built on relational and interpersonal communication. The latter was never formally captured by the researcher, but she was aware of the natural groupings and alliances within alliances that formed.
3.3.2 TEAM/GROUP LEADERSHIP SKILLS

'T' could not have existed in isolation from its members. It was a system that relied on institutional commitment for the production and delivery of its business. Groups and teams (often cross institutional) were at its core, and in order for the collective to be successfully sustained there was a corresponding need for a strong group and for team leadership skills to be displayed at the most senior levels.

The Developing Collaborative Management Skills project had a strong emphasis on equipping the Policy Group with knowledge about its own function as a team, about the need for understanding individual institutional and collaborative culture, process dynamics and structures as well as the change dynamic. Learning took place about having the capacity within the Policy Group to think from a Policy Group based focus as opposed to an individual CEO centred focus. Thus the activities within the project of clarifying goals, strategies and roles to accomplish goals were an important part of the CEO collaborative development activity and process. Identifying team oriented structures, and constructing and deconstructing the vision to work together was to become a fundamental gauge of how effectively members of the 'T' Policy Group could work together.

The need for a shift to 'facilitative leadership skills' as an important aspect of collaborative management was apparent as well as challenging for individuals. This was observed in how members of the Policy Group approached problem solving and decision making, how they engaged in constructive dialogue and their reluctance to tackle conflict resolution. While some of these skills were facilitated easily and high quality conversations about issues that mattered were held (usually when the immediate gains could be quantified) at other times the internal strain in terms of maintaining self awareness, and understanding different peoples' perspectives and roles, as well and employing analytical and thinking skills at a number of different levels, proved to be very exhausting. Facilitation skills often tie communication back into the equation and self-interest needs to be put aside for the greater collaborative good. The Chair of 'T' went to great lengths to explain and negotiate as well as initially displaying sensitivity in logistical skills such as agenda development, location of meetings, set-up of rooms and reporting. Ultimately one of the most significant facilitations was how and to whom to tell the 'T' story. It was understood that 'how' the story got told or 'how' key incidents were reported was a critical success factor.
3.3.3 GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES

In Chapter 6, the distinction made by Kotter (1990) between leadership and management was noted. He stated that "management is about coping with complexity" and "leadership is about coping with change". (1990:4). However the distinctions are made, management skills are seen as complimentary to leadership capacities and the divide in the minds of the Policy Group can be detected at various points where they blamed the loss of momentum in strategy (their leadership function) on the fact that they kept getting drawn into the operational (that they saw as management). Within the context of the emerging consortium, its business and the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project, a core management competency was the Policy Group’s systems thinking in terms of ordering ideas and patterns while understanding their influences and inter-relatedness. This thinking also set the steer for change and allowed them to see inter-dependencies and inter-organisational processes. Changing one aspect of something in a collaborative could often have impact elsewhere.

3.3.4 POLITICAL/LEGAL COMPETENCIES

The backdrop of the policy environment in higher education was noted in Chapter 5, together with the corresponding need for CEOs to have the competence to facilitate, negotiate and collaborate in an increasingly competitive and contentious political and legal environment. The complexities of interorganisational relational activities can therefore be contextualised in not just an understanding of the legal status of the entity within which they are operating as a collective, but also in terms of the legal and regulatory issues that might arise from the association.

In addition one of the greatest challenges for the Policy Group was to create an environment of empowerment, and to explore for themselves new ways of communicating and interacting that would challenge the normal competitive instincts of the higher education sector. The Policy Group wanted to achieve this without compromising their perceived independence and local autonomy.
From the outset of the research the ‘T’ Policy Group were aware of the fact that collaborative alliances would not succeed without due vigilance and attention to the processes that supported them. The Heads of Agreement set out clearly the parameters of where ‘T’ aimed to make impact in the higher education sector and the Development Collaborative Management Skills project itself was a recognition, that external facilitation and an additional resource in this regard, (particularly at the beginning of a collaborative management venture), would be vital. Everything that ‘T’ embarked upon, from its journey of ‘strategic visioning’, putting in place an organisational and operational infrastructure through to building a collaborative alliance culture from the collective learning about and sharing of individual institutional cultures, was based on process. Issues of engendering trust, making decisions and measuring success were not only tasks in themselves, but elements of collaborative management that had to be approached from a processual standpoint. In that sense ‘process’ remains fundamental to any collaborative undertaking and is often a neglected, but an essential dimension of collaboration.
4.1 STRATEGIC VISIONING

It can be seen from the account that together diverse experiences, tacit knowledge, differences in beliefs and individual assumptions in order to make decisions about a strategy for 'T' and its implementation emerged during the research as a fundamental and constantly recurring theme. Both the literature on strategic alliances and the focus of this as an activity within the research indicated the importance of a clear and shared vision as a critical success factor in alliance activity. The commitment to strategic visioning could be seen through sharing and brainstorming ideas together in the face-to-face situation at Policy Group, talking through the importance of being proactive in the new HEFCE 'Developing Good Management Practice' funding stream and animating the dream of what 'T' could be. The substance of the vision did not impinge upon any one entity’s specific turf, but aspired to be something that was defined, valued and would act as an interpretive framework for actions and beliefs. It has been noted by Baum (1998) that 'vision… is not a picture of any specific future… but an image of success for the participants…' and he noted further that 'the hope that the vision offers matters more than its specific intellectual content.' (Baum, 1998:419)

4.1.1. FINDING THE PURPOSE

At the end of this research the question was still being asked about 'T's common cause. This might suggest that the processes to support the finding of a shared intent for 'T' had not succeeded in the way anticipated by some. The purpose of the partnership was one that held together over a considerable period of time, but despite the planning and the energy put into it, at times it surfaced as fragile and not robust. In some senses 'T' had achieved material gain and tangible success in the short term in the form of project funding and an enhanced external profile, despite the fact that a watertight rationale that was acceptable to all had not taken root during the partnership. A plant metaphor is quite apt as 'T' was putting out 'runners' and chasing various visions, but they rested on top of the soil and did not become firmly implanted. Building a shared vision required infinite patience and skill, with ways of keeping goals visible and communicating 'T' success. The short term goals were visible and the success was ably demonstrated, but the process of building the shared vision was something that was 'captured' for a moment and then slipped away elusively as CEOs found that they just could not achieve the collective
consensus and commitment necessary to be sure about where they were going in the longer term.

At nearly all stages in its development, 'T' was working along parallel tracks on strategic and operational issues, with each and every stage underpinned by process. There was no template for how the Policy Group would work and as the CEOs were juggling a number of lines of activity to build the consortium, the early days of 'getting to know each other' brought with it a great respect for the consensual approach and full deliberation of issues. The Developing Collaborative Management Skills project facilitator took the Policy Group back through the process of presenting a vision through formulating the dominant values of the consortium in story form, and the process of modelling by metaphor underpinned this process. The value of using metaphors as part of the process of modelling a new collaborative can be captured as follows:

FIGURE 18: USING METAPHORS IN COLLABORATIVE FORMATION

Using metaphors in Collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diverse Experiences</th>
<th>Metaphorical Conversations</th>
</tr>
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The processes employed in trying to ascertain the purpose of 'T' bolstered the context of what the Policy Group was trying to create as well as underpinning how the Policy Group would work together. In the beginning it was natural that there was uncertainty over goals, about the personalities involved and how the rules of the consortium would operate – especially in a collaborative of equals, but where one might feel that some are more equal than others because of differences in scale of institution, national profile, etc. It was evident in the early days that there were
worries about whether individuals and the institutions had a 'fit' within the group, issues of control over what happens and indeed commitment issues in terms of how closely individuals and institutions would have to work. All of these were unknowns at the beginning and could act as impediments to achieving a clear and shared vision. The immediate tasks, therefore, were to meet face-to-face, to spend time getting to know each other as well as learning about each other's institutions, checking out assumptions and finding out what was shared in common.

Evolving group processes involved sorting out power structures in terms of 'control or being controlled', assessing the ease of how collaboration and competition would rest side by side and what would ensue when conflict arose. An illustration of this can be seen when the delicate business of sharing institutional intentions for the first time in respect of ASN bidding was being conducted at the same time as the high profile HEFCE 'Developing Good Management Practice' project was commencing (April 2000). The fact that an incoming member misinterpreted that his function might be to assent or dissent in respect of the quality of other members institutional ASN bids was indicative of the power relations that he thought he was entering into within the consortium. This incident encapsulated all the fears of control or be controlled, the inherent tensions of collaborating to compete and the resolution by the Chair of a potential conflict scenario.

Other issues of balancing rhetoric and action within the consortium, unspoken fears, assumptions and the potential for offence to be taken, although not always realised were all important aspects of sorting out power structures and identifying what would work. In the various conversations and modelling by metaphor that took place in 'T' and through the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project there was not just an acknowledgement of differences among 'T' members but that conversations would 'reshuffle the cards' and that there was a potential for 'new cards' to be created. Whereas different visions of both 'T' and the project's outcome could be an impediment to collaboration, instead, by stressing the interplay of varying interests and the process of consensus-building in response to personal agendas and decisions, empowerment was possible and new agendas and solutions could be brought to the table.
4.1.2 SCOPING POSSIBILITIES AND PARAMETERS OF 'T'

The Developing Collaborative Management Skills project presented a microcosm of many 'wicked issues' (Chapter 6, page 128) that were facing 'T'. Both scoping the purpose and possibilities and parameters of 'T' in the collaborative setting had to be viewed in the context of a collective wishing to tackle and capitalise on policy problems (that in themselves could not be definitively described). There would be no simple solutions in the sense of definitive and objective answers to emergent and intransigent issues through 'T'. Instead, the tackling of issues through its own business and The Developing Collaborative Management Skills project would have the effect on 'T' of decision making that would result in just 'better' or 'worse' developments. This decision-making could be further complicated because of different 'T' members' approaches and understandings, and perhaps the most important aspect in building the strategic vision of 'T' would be securing a shared consensus about what it would be.

Insights into the process of scoping the possibilities and parameters of 'T' can be seen within the account from discussions at the Policy Group. This varied from its aspiration to 'punch above its weight', to creating a sense of urgency and expectation and providing a new learning model of strategy formation and the ultimate goal of sharing with others what they thought could be an alternative exportable model of federation. The rehearsal of findings and the experiences from varying stakeholder platform perspectives was also part of the process and worked well in gaining external profile. As can be seen while there was no objection to the above, securing a robust rationale for 'T' to remain together became increasingly difficult in the changing higher education dynamic, and there was even a suggestion that their very association together (of performing and creative arts institutions) could be working counter-productively in the growing regional agendas.

The best practices or processes in a collaborative in many ways mirrored those of the sole institutional context, but with the addition of a number of behaviours that are essential to making alliance management work. Thus, informing, consulting and delegating, planning and performing, problem solving, clarifying roles and objectives, monitoring, operations and environment, motivating, recognising and rewarding, supporting and mentoring, managing conflict and team building and networking are all taken as part of the management skillset that CEOs must possess. However, in addition, specific knowledge, skills and values were expected in the collaborative
setting, and particular emphasis on skills of facilitation and negotiation, including
looking for commonalities, commitment and persistence, persuasiveness and
credibility, strategic/political skills and trustworthiness.

The pursuit of the clarity of purpose and objectives that all members could follow,
almost became a project in itself, and certainly served as a 'testbed' for many of the
specific skills of facilitation and negotiation outlined above on the part of all members.
While operational decisions in relation to collaborative management were
successfully taken and arrived at relatively easily, the business of strategy formation
and the collective 'grand design' was difficult to capture and translate into reality.
This was the real test of leadership skills and not just management skills for 'T' in the
collaborative setting.

5.0 ORGANISATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

This research demonstrates insights into the framework for co-operation surrounding
consortium activity. The account encompasses issues of co-operation and
competition, tensions around resources and responsibilities and an indication that
while all members of the Policy Group were on the whole happy to 'tinker at the
edges' of collaboration, a marked reluctance to grapple with the real 'meat' emerged
with an accompanying shying away with polite and sometimes 'weary' participation.
Unpacking the roots of this dynamic in consortial work would therefore seem vitally
important.

The 'T' Consortium was formed to promote and advance the interests of its member
institutions, to play its part in preserving the 'distinctiveness' of specialist institutions
and as a by-product it 'tapped' into the goals of transformation and (possibly)
rationalisation that were being set by policy makers at national level. How 'T' was
'sold' to HEFCE, however, reversed that order with the scenario-visioning of 'T'
playing a part in the achievement of national goals through operating as an effective
model of collaboration and collaborative management as a group of cognate
specialist institutions. 'T's characterisation can be established not as a modest,
neutral, third party that would manage co-operative ventures once the 'T' members
were on board, but a much grander design of securing long term commitment,
crafting rules and conventions for co-operation in an increasingly competitive and
turbulent UK higher education sector. For the Chair and two other of the founder
members it was not a 'loose' relationship of members, and in time another member
was to join their vision of some kind of larger conceptual framework within which cooperative activities could be articulated and serve to develop a competitive edge. However, this was to leave three members whose approach can best be summarised as 'institutionally' centred and who saw themselves managing and facilitating cooperative endeavours only as far as and at the pace agreed to by members institutions. This divide surfaced very early on in the consortium.

Both a 'soft' and a 'hard' approach to putting in place an organisational and operational infrastructure occurred within 'T' and the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project – the 'soft' through the Heads of Agreement that held the consortium together and the 'hard' through trying to create a new institutional form by means of an exploration of other collaborative management models within the project. The motivation was to create a form or framework that would mitigate against the effects of behaviour inspired by institutional self-interest or more narrow conceptions of competition.

Within the account the discussions at Policy Group meetings and in the CEO workshops captured the fact that both the Heads of Agreement and minutes of their meetings, as well other written documentation demonstrated the consortium's identity and view of itself. This in turn acted as a platform to propel future activity. Often, however, the terminology used was confusing because it conflated the role of the consortium with specific activities or projects that should more properly have been conceived as an enactment of its role. 'T' was fleshing out its infrastructure and defining its roles as it proceeded, often acting in completely new territories and discovering what was and what was not possible when working collaboratively. Some things worked better than others, but it was always magnanimous in success or failure.

Organisation and management of a collaborative venture is of fundamental importance and the way that a consortium sets out its organisational and operational process can mean the difference between success and failure. The organisational structure of 'T' was set up as an individual entity through which institutions could bring together their expertise and band together for specific projects. While there was immediate institutional impact, success within 'T' gave birth to a somewhat 'schizophrenic' relationship of the institutions to 'T' and to their own institutional responsibilities. On the one hand, the 'T' members created 'T' and 'owned' it, but it also became possible to 'disown' it (when convenient), as an organisation promoting
someone else's interests and not their own. The tendency for some CEOs to talk about the consortium not as their own collective, but as if it had some indefinable power over them and vested in the Secretariat, appeared to transfer the power elsewhere. However, in turn the Secretariat was acutely aware of its powerlessness to pursue any course of action without the express permission or mandate of the 'real' consortium expressed through the membership of the Policy Group.

One of the questions of process, therefore, was how to set up and accommodate an infrastructure that could balance the consortium as a site of co-operation, voluntarily set up by 'autonomous' institutions on the one hand against a potential site of struggle with the institutions that constituted 'T' fearing the implications of the agendas they were taking on. Perhaps there was an underestimation of how deeply interests were invested in the individual forms and structures of the institutions that had resulted from previous mergers and fights to sustain 'independence'. Rather than engage in power struggles within the consortium context, the preferred option was to sit on the fence with the implied threat that they could always walk away – although it was interesting to note that during the period of the research, no one did.

6.0 COLLABORATIVE PROCESSES OF CULTURE, CLIMATE AND COMMUNICATION

One of the findings of this research is that for real systemic change to take place, a longer lead time than that envisaged by 'T' has to take place. This needs to be accompanied by constant vigilance and rechecking of whether the processes to support consortium activity are correct. All collaborations involve changing the organisational culture from one of individual institutional action to one of multi-institutional decision making and problem solving, and this can be a very slow and sometimes painful process. As small specialist institutions most of 'T' members were used to a culture of collaboration in order to access resources and gain benefit for their own organisation, but the ideas being addressed within 'T' of giving up something for the greater good of the growth of 'T', pursuing their collective 'distinctiveness' and achieving benefit in this way was to pose a new experience for most of them. While a positive veto by a majority never took place, the reaction by a minority to agenda items, such as whether to pursue discussions on a potential University of the Arts elicited such strong responses, that in the absence of clear decision making structures, they simply stultified actions and there was a resultant stalemate.
The greatest change in the collective takes place at the point where there are different cultures being brought together, and where individuals are learning about each other. However, it almost goes without saying that it is a lot easier to collaborate and manage the process if everyone knows why they are together. All parties need to be up to speed on what the total process and project is. In the account it can be seen that while the original four member institutions had rehearsed this in great detail and through the pre-formation of 'T' had gained a more explicit knowledge of what 'T' was together for, the later members appeared to have more difficulty both in coming to terms with what commitment to 'T' meant as well as understanding the objectives of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. While a willingness to work together was evident from the early euphoria of most institutions joining 'T', in practice the degree of trust combined with a willingness to take risks was a 'slow build' based on the CEOs involved having opportunities to get to know each other and to both communicate with and learn from one another. Factors that affected this process were the speeds at which individuals felt comfortable, personal preferences and prejudices as well as the difficulties represented by size and scale of institutions and when institutions do not perceive themselves as equal.

There are many findings in the account that relate to issues of trust as a basis of collaborative culture and evidence the mutual respect (or in some cases the lack of it) in the process of collaborative management. The early wins for 'T' in terms of bidding and the success with ASNs engendered a feeling of 'safety' and in turn the positive results evidenced a willingness to take on riskier ideas. When 'T' did not succeed in a bidding round, there was no penalty for failure and the lessons learnt as part of the collaborative process were usually viewed in good part. It would appear that 'T' quite quickly became robust enough to allow institutions to celebrate and take credit for the achievement when success came, but to shoulder the responsibility when there was not success or when things did not go according to plan. There were thus moments of intense passion and pathos.

There are also within the account examples of lack of trust where individuals obviously felt that 'T' was going in directions to which they had not signed up. Despite the fact that many of the CEOs of the art & design institutions knew each other and had worked closely together through SCOP and other associations, it was still possible for close and comfortable working relationships that had been anticipated to go wrong. Thus, for example, when it emerged in June 2001 that
Priory Institute had been in discussion with another institution outside of 'T' about a potential merger a dashing of previously comfortable relationships emerged and there was a degree of disbelief that although possibly in the best interests of the institution, the surrender of a specialist institution 'one of its own' could be contemplated. Thus in collaborative management where any one of the CEOs felt betrayed, looked down upon, or taken advantage of and those feelings were not communicated within the Policy Group, the overall aims of both 'T' and the project would appear compromised.

The combination of the CEO workshops in the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project with the regularity of Policy Group meetings inevitably meant that the CEOs in the 'T' Policy Group got to know each other a lot better and worked closely together over a period of time. It could be suggested that because of the pre-existing relationships within 'T' the collaborative venture accomplished so many goals rapidly. However, it also emerged that some CEOs took consolation from their pre-existing relationships when they banded together to commonly resist an idea held by the majority of the group. There was thus a comfort level that allowed the collaborative to both achieve and to resist.

In the account, many instances surface where 'T' institutions perceived themselves as competitors and this acted as a hurdle to achieve smooth collaboration. The overarching need for the 'T' institutions to champion their 'distinctiveness' at the expense of competition had to assume priority in keeping the consortium together and the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project, amongst other matters aimed to illustrate that the benefit of cooperation could clearly outweigh the costs. The project hoped to pave the way to new sources of revenue and material success that could be equitably distributed to all parties and would enhance reputation and the climate for success. Within 'T' there were institutional differences in size, wealth and diversity of mission and it was hoped that trust and respect would be engendered through the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project and allow individual institutions to feel valued and respected as equals at the table. While in the first year of the project there was progress, a most significant event was the negotiations by Priory Institute with an institution outside 'T'. This acted as a catalytic factor for a significant confrontation that occurred involving those institutions engaged in 'pure research' and who were eligible for entry into the RAE and those institutions who were involved in near market and vocational 'research'.

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It could be argued that the resultant fracture occurred through a combination of both action and individual chemistry. What was apparent was that once trust was lost it became very difficult to restore. While at one level the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project appeared to be a bold and confident move reflecting and reinforcing the positive profile that 'T' had achieved in its first year, there were a number of trust issues subsumed within it; would all the institutions come out ahead from this in terms of producing new revenue streams or through cost savings or avoidance? would all CEOs feel sufficiently confident to communicate freely and to speak with candour at the residential workshop and to share perceptions about purpose, progress to date, the policies, practices and personalities within 'T'? The project allowed 'T' to employ consultants and facilitators to help explore specific aspects of collaborative management skills. This occurred in the first workshop on models of UK, European, US and global collaborative management, through to assistance with examining the impact of technology on collaborative management, but perhaps most importantly via the person(s) referred to in the account as the 'external facilitator' who worked during the period of this research in residential and other workshops over a two year period between November 2000 and January 2002. All the consultants worked hard to facilitate in an almost disinterested, neutral way what could not be done by the Chair or by any individual from within 'T'. The 'external facilitator' in particular worked to identify specific problems that emerged, and the flow of communication was kept going in a candid honest way. This operated along twin tracks of 'process' through facilitation in order to generate ideas and negotiation phases, and 'product' in terms of the expertise in achieving outputs for the project.

Culturing and nurturing relationships was an important aspect of success which the Chair was very conscious of and spoke confidently about. These were recorded in both private meetings of the Policy Group and on public platforms. The Chair was also aware of the time element and there was an early realisation that collaborative management within the consortium would take more time than first imagined. During the three year period of the research there was a dichotomy in that the Policy Group always acted as if they were in early discussions about 'T' and that their individual exit strategies could be triggered at a moment's notice (allowing them to think through logistical issues and to not feel too trapped too soon) whereas external audiences viewed 'T' as a model of a 'going concern' and successful consortium with ever deepening commitment on its members' part.

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4.3.1. MANAGING TRUST

One of the processes involved in 'T' and the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project was to create a safe place for developing shared purpose and action. This was emphasised verbally in Policy Group, but it was also acknowledged that just saying the words was not sufficient. Trust would have to be built up through experience and demonstrating that in order to be trusted you must be trustworthy. The credits and debits of trust (using the analogy of a bank account) can be maximised by making deposits and minimising withdrawals. Therefore, honesty and openness, keeping promises, kindness and courtesies, remaining loyal to the absent and apologising when things have gone wrong, can stack up and engender trust, whereas placing blame, breaking promises, being unkind, violating expectations, gossip, rumours and arrogance engenders distrust. The experiences in the narrative in Chapter 8, largely illustrate how trust was built up over a period of time from a variety of actions. What remained significant, however, was how one large 'withdrawal' from the trust account, such as the incident discussed earlier of a partner institution contemplating a merger with an institution outside of 'T' could instantly almost erase all the deposits.

4.3.2 MEASURING SUCCESS

The metrics for measuring performance of collaborations appear both similar and different to those of analysing and managing organisational performance. However, it is clear that the framework would be very confusing if traditional metrics of success were used. Markets and other factors can determine measures of success in the sole institutional setting and can be seen as a result of effective planning and positioning of an institution. Whereas it is possible to use tried and tested determinants of what constitutes an excellent institution, (e.g. quality assurance reports, value for money, financial security as well as other measures) the question of what determines successful alliance management is a more vexing and emergent question. In practice this was easily clouded by the success that 'T' was enjoying in attracting project funding. Everyone in 'T' was given an equal opportunity to both participate in and influence decision making, to both bid and be part of bids, but whether they capitalised on this opportunity was another question. Both the quantity and quality of information exchanged, the handling of conflict, the impact on institutions of the sharing of vision and value, and satisfaction, commitment and gains from projects could all be measured to a stronger or lesser degree.
Other measures of success related to achieving the overarching goals, gaining recognition from targets set by the Policy Group, gaining new consciousness of issues, creating lasting networks, achieving longevity or acquiring new skills. An alternative way of looking at the measures of success, however, would be to rank internal and external elements. The internal relates to the consortium's ability to sustain participation and maintain the effort and structure (e.g. the process of relating to each other, structure, strategies, resources, decision making, commitment and leadership), whereas the external profile, having a voice, being invited to national fora, (when no institution alone might have secured a place), demonstrated external measure of success.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has discussed the findings from the account and data generated over the three year observation of 'T' and the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. It has identified context, themes and an interpretation for each of the parallel dimensions of 'policy', 'people' and 'process' and from this the inter-relationship and inter-dependencies of many aspects of collaborative management can be seen.

The account provided a rich illustration of the dynamics of collaborative management taking place in a fast moving and turbulent sector and the impact of managing and anticipating chronological developments, the many faces of inter-personal relationships and activity and the processes to support a new and evolving form of working. The findings suggest a multiplex of activities, relationships, pressures and issues to be managed concurrently, and in addition to the normal 'day jobs' of members of the Policy Group in their own institutional capacities.

The findings have been generated through the researcher's capacity as practitioner researcher, and in Chapter 10 of the research some of the findings that have emerged will be further corroborated or challenged through the personal constructs by the CEOs in reflecting on their experiences of collaborative management.
CHAPTER 10 - FIELD INTERVIEWS OF ‘T’ POLICY GROUP CEO’S

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter researches an understanding of collaborative management from the position of an empirical researcher, and from a more distanced and objective perspective than a practitioner researcher engaging in reflective practice. Despite the inherent difficulties of adopting this role for the researcher in her particular circumstances of close proximity to and personal knowledge of both the CEOs and their institutional contexts and collaborative relationships (explored in Chapter 2), the researcher conducted field interviews with each of the seven ‘T’ CEOs over a six week period between May and July 2003.

The approach of this chapter is one of identifying, describing and analysing the components that contribute to collaborative management from the personal narratives/stories of the seven CEOs who form the Policy Group and to allow their CEO ‘voice about’ and the ‘chronicling of’, the practice and process of collaborative management. The seven interviewees are referred to in their ‘alias’ forms and the proforma that was drafted for the research as an aide memoire for the interviews is included as Appendix 4.

2.0 THE PURPOSE, POSSIBILITIES AND PARAMETERS OF ‘T’ COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

The initial focus of the questions to the CEOs in the ‘T’ Policy Group was about:

- a CEO understanding of the concepts, terminology and nature of collaborative management at the beginning of and during the project
- factors accounting for the growth of academic consortia in the UK, and
- the attraction of membership of the ‘T’ Consortium, in particular

2.1 CONCEPTS, TERMINOLOGY AND MEANINGS OF COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

In Chapter 4 it was suggested that it is important in collaborative management to have a common understanding of terminology, and particularly in a new and emerging multi-relational dynamic where there is potential for ambiguity and

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1 Project here being meant in both senses of the “T” initiative itself and the Developing Collaborative Management Skills funded initiative

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misinterpretation. It was further indicated that the two words 'collaborative' and 'management' might be uneasy bedfellows and in the context of this research where the Policy Group were working on a funded project entitled 'Developing Collaborative Management Skills for Senior Executives' as well as being engaged in the practice of collaborative management it was an important starting point to discover their understanding and meaning of the term and concept. The implications of this in terms of whether there was clarity of approach for them at the beginning, a degree of reticence or scepticism or simply a willingness to set out on a journey of discovery together was an interesting avenue to pursue.

From analysis of the recorded interviews the meaning of the word 'collaborative management' for each of the CEOs appeared to have a shifting emphasis. Some members of the 'T' Policy Group gave an objective and rational assessment of its meaning while others gave a more reflective response based on their thinking about it in relation to their experience of the project. Two CEOs in particular, gave what I have termed an 'outsider response' based on their experience drawn from outside the project and 'T'.

Their statements represented a mix, drawing on aspects of process, and people (leadership) issues as defined in this research and also very much anchored in the policy context. Individual statements varied from suggestions that 'management is a process, not a thing' (Professor Searle); that it is about 'leading well' (Professor Pope), through to a more tailored and subjective understanding aligned to thinking about 'T' and experiential learning from the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project such as it is 'a key word in defining what collaboration is – collaboration is not focused enough, it is too generalist' (Professor Close). Professor Avis gave a particularly animated statement indicating the emotions involved in collaborative management. In his words it included: 'coping – managing this thingy, this 'blobby' strange thingy that you can't get hold of' (Professor Avis); while Professor Diggins pointed out that:

as seven CEOs we are used to managing in a very direct way...it is actually about being able to work as a group of peers and evolve a shared perception which is actually rather different to the normal everyday affairs that we are all working in.

Professor Rhodes speaking from, what I have termed an 'outside perspective', suggested that there should be a conceptual and historical questioning of management.
how does the collaboration originate and does it come from a management background? artistically within higher education there can be various issues that prompt collaboration. Therefore the question of management relates to the manner in which the collaboration has motivation.

Another alternative view, drawing on experience from outside 'T', was put by Professor Moore suggesting that:

'management' can be seen in two ways, for example the regional collaboration we are involved in [not referring to 'T' here] and where CEOs manage themselves. The task is to get everyone on board around the table and to get them to operate/manage themselves or where funds are secured, to appoint a co-ordinator.

There was general consensus that collaborative management was a 'good thing' offering the potential to gain greater leverage through a new and innovative platform, despite the definitions of 'collaborative management' describing differences between managing in a collaborative context and the CEO role as an autonomous institutional leader. For example, Professor Searle suggested:

it is what we should be doing with colleagues and exploring how to achieve it

whilst Professor Close said:

it is about actively directing, pushing, achieving something, creatively.

An attraction was the challenge of 'being able to work as a group of peers and with a shared perception' (Professor Diggins), although it was observed that:

...people engage in the collaboration for different reasons, so collaborative management relates to the manner in which the collaboration has its motivation.

(Professor Rhodes)

The latter point was echoed by Professor Avis when noting:

collaborative management means dealing with different people's approaches... I'm one of the many trying to lead and manage this moveable feast.

From the statements above it can be seen that there was a diversity of views and mind sets about what constituted collaborative management. At the end of the project each CEO had no difficulty talking about collaborative management, and it appeared that it had taken root in the minds of each CEO, but there was some difficulty in capturing exactly what it was, what it meant to them and how it could be defined authoritatively.
The skill of compromise as a component of defining what collaborative management meant was mentioned in several cases as a way of seeking best solutions in collaborative contexts. It was interesting that the CEO mindset often appeared bilateral rather than one of sharing with multiple partners, i.e. as Professor Searle described, for example, the individual CEO is negotiating with 'T' as something that they are part of, placing the onus and responsibility on 'T' as an entity and as something separate and almost distinct from the institutions and their CEOs:

but in practice of course it is a process of interacting with a number of individuals and things

(Professor Searle)

It emerged that many CEOs saw collaborative management driven by 'short-termism' as an immediate response to changing circumstances and in turn felt it was treated and funded in this way by the Funding Council and other stakeholders in the sector. However, in Professor Searle’s opinion, and from what he had seen in the ‘T’ visit to the University of Wisconsin System Administration, the benefit of engaging in collaboration and its management was not viewed as a ‘quick fix’ and would only be evident in the medium to long term. Indeed, as already noted in the account Chapter 8: page 196 and Chapter 9: page 210, the Vice President at the University of Wisconsin System Administration had expressed a degree of surprise at how much had been achieved by ‘T’ and through the support of the Funding Council in three years, compared to the historical line of thirty years in Wisconsin.

Professor Close’s view on the significance and importance of investing in collaborative management was evidenced by the number of collaborative relationships that were apparent, at both institutional level, through individuals and the hierarchies in the organisation and through ‘T’. He thought that the success or otherwise of ‘T’ as a proponent of collaborative management would be affected by how ‘tight’ the agreement binding the partnership was, in formal and relational terms. Professor Close considered that the ‘T’ agreement covering these things ranked 5/10 on a ten point scale, but this was a process that he saw “as on the way up”. The challenge for him was in assessing how to deal with “peers who won’t listen and do what you tell them”. The solution to this, he saw as negotiation, and the ability to formulate a stronger case:

it’s about trying to get people on board, to understand and appreciate the benefits of collaboration - not using tried and tested methods.
The view of Professor Pope in setting out what collaborative management meant, focused on the distinction between collaborative management “and that of managing one's own institution”. He believed that there was a particular need for CEOs in a collaborative setting to cede more of their power to the Chair of the collaborative and to its Executive Officer. This view was shared and understood by Professor Diggins, who deep into his interview talked about the Chair’s role in influencing and speaking for ‘T’:

...the Chair will be empowered because it carries out authority for all of us.

However, Professor Diggins also talked about identifying differences between institutional and collaborative management in terms of the fact that:

‘managing’ in a collaboration with a shared perception is very different to day to day affairs...We think of ‘T’ as having a flat management system, but actually we have an extraordinary power base within our own institutions.

From this statement it was assumed that he was anxious to bolster the strength and capacity of each partner representing an individual autonomous institution. By default, therefore, the collective of ‘T’ (with its critical mass) would present an even stronger base from which to operate and give a louder voice for the specialist institution. However in comparing institutional and collaborative management, he was aware of the fact that “the difficulties for winning collaboratively are similar to the competitive drivers for individual CEOs”. His commitment to both the individual institution and the collective of ‘T’ and his part as a ‘collaborative leader’ was couched in the following terms:

yes, I do feel I have a part in personally managing ‘T’, not always but sometimes. It is the Chair that manages ‘T’ but Policy Group does have a role and mutuality is important”.

Professor Rhodes’ view of what collaborative management meant to him, related more to a description of the ‘carrot and stick’ approach needed when compared with managing his own institution – it often took more effort to get others to see the benefits of collaboration and in his particular case related more to the particular association or the disciplinary grouping of institutions that formed ‘T’. Whilst acknowledging that collaboration and collaborating with other practitioners was central to Sunnybank’s mission and other art forms, he noted that the particular slice of the sector represented by his institution was conservative and that they had not done well in embracing complementary disciplines.
Professor Moore described collaborative management in terms of the impact on his institution and particularly as part of the obligations that he saw for himself as a leader. He did not view the art of collaborative management as a great 'step change'. Neither did he feel it was 'new' because of what he saw as the requirement in higher education and public service to manage in a collaborative way. He also drew on his experiences of working in the US and indicated how he 'enabled' collaborative management to work through his large Directorate and Senior Management Team at Earlsdon. He noted, however, the distinction between his institution and that of 'T' as one where:

at the end of the day, I am the Chief Executive... I have to hear what people say, take the advice and all the rest of it and at the end of the day I have to make a final decision and that decision goes to Governors... I have to make the decision and say, well this is what I think, this is what we have to do.

Professor Avis' personal reflections on the differences in his role of collaboratively managing a consortium, compared with organisational management of his institution, noted that in his own organisation there were clear units, management structures and those procedures were transparent. Even though there was an acknowledgement that 'T' placed great emphasis on generating formal structures in collaborative management, within the consortium context, Professor Avis felt that:

...it's more grasping at things. Even though there is a structure in place, I tend to not feel necessarily that I have a management role. It doesn't tend to relate to that structure.

Additionally in pursuing the question of who or what was being managed, he felt that some CEOs thought that they were actually managing the individual initiative in the light of 'T' and its middle to longer term strategy and that there inevitably followed compromises in this for them. Others mentioned managing the 'T' Co-ordinator, or managing the impact of the external environment on the consortium. It also included giving an appropriate diagnosis, coming to a conclusion about 'T' positioning and subsequent actions, or the need to manage and balance consortium interests of formulating a vision about its long term gain for collective winning. Implicit in these discussions on management of initiatives versus considerations of strategy was that 'management was bad' and not what they should be doing, whereas 'strategy was good' and evidence of leadership.

Of particular interest was a comment about managing the 'give and take necessary in the early days for individual members' (Professor Pope). This almost suggested that this was a time limited event (applicable only at the beginning) and no longer a
consideration. Another particularly astute observation was the paradox of the ‘soft style’ needed for collaborative management coupled with an actual ‘hardness’ in order to be able to achieve outcomes and to achieve consensus (Professor Diggins). This was supported by Professor Searle’s sentiment that “the more we collaborate, the more difficult it becomes” - a clear paradox that came through in each of the interviews and indicated just how challenging and complex collaborative management could be. It also showed that progress could not be measured in linear terms.

Professor Avis spoke about the value of collaborative management in terms of sharing views about aspirations of where each partner HE institution is going and their respective interpretations of the policy context. His view of the dynamics at work was suggested as one of the mutuality of sharing positions and judgements, trying to reach a consortium consensus view on matters, combined with taking account of individuals:

different histories, backgrounds, different kinds of intelligence and values.

Articulating the distinction between institutional and collaborative management and the art of transferable skills he reverted back to talk of what he called:

... this ‘blobby thing’. What is it that is being managed? who is being managed? coped with and what individual aims and objectives are there – a collection of agreements? Perhaps a managing agreement of certain areas for managing, sometimes? No, we’re not managing projects. We’re all seeing and looking at projects, but the collective thing that we are attempting to manage remains unclear.

Because of the importance of different levels of collaborative management within this research (both in terms of ‘learning about’ and ‘practice’), clarification was sought at the beginning of each CEO interview about individual understanding and the distinctions that might be drawn between the practice of collaborative management in the business of ‘T’ and ‘collaborative management’ within the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project itself. The aim was to get ‘under the skin’ of a superficial understanding of collaborative management that they might have been part of by default, through the HEFCE funded project, and also to see how much reflection was taking place from an individual perspective and its translation to their thinking about the day to day running and leadership of ‘T’.

The responses were varied. Professor Searle drew a distinction because he thought that individual initiatives formed part of the collaborative management business of ‘T’
and its middle to longer term aspirations. On the other hand, the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project he viewed in staff development terms for both the 'T' Policy Group and its individual members, although he agreed that the real focus of the project was to assess the benefits to 'T' of collaborative management. For those in the consortium who joined later, during its first year of operation and after the bid had been written a different stance was adopted.

Professor Moore, for example, CEO of the last institution to join 'T' during the period of research, noted that they were not part of 'T' when the project was bid for, and therefore he saw the project as something running in parallel with and not "like the core of the operation". For him it was one of two things of significance: the fact that the developing good management practice project was being conducted and watched nationally, but also the more important role of dealing with 'T' and the new faces around the table. As illustrated by the account in Chapter 8, this high visibility and with a project of such prominence was a 'mixed blessing' and some members were not deterred from their view that it was a dangerous strategy on which to embark.

A contrasting view, where no distinction was made between the work of 'T' and the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project was presented by Professor Diggins:

I just ran the two things together. The work of the 'Developing Collaborative Management Skills' project was valuable in creating space and gave time for us to talk about conceptual processes, about what a consortium is, and where the day to day work is that you are addressing. It is such that it can be very hard to stand back from and to have a discussion on. I think collaborative management and the day to day work of collaboration do touch, but I'm not necessarily thinking all the time about management structures and actual procedures. I'm thinking more of the current agendas which are White Paper/HEFCE strategic plan driven.

Professor Pope was more circumspect in his views on the distinction between 'T's work and the 'Developing Collaborative Management Skills' project. He felt that it "did not really partition his thinking in this way", and that the funded project only went half way down the road compared to what it could have achieved. He wholly embraced the challenges of the project and welcomed the attention that the project attracted. He went on to explain the reasons why he thought this view was not shared by all of the Policy Group:

Whereas there were lots of lessons learned and instant messages from it, the 'T' Policy Group did not take it the whole hog, for obvious reasons. I think the bigger lessons that could have been learnt weren't put to rest. You know,
they're sitting on the shelf somewhere, they haven't been answered, they didn't go through. That was to be expected, actually. I had a long conversation with a colleague and I said 'do you realise that this could be the project that will take us to the edge of the precipice and it's going to be an interesting matter whether or not people put on their wings or stick on their parachutes. We knew that, but we thought they would do the latter. However, there was a cluster around the table wanting to do the latter, but the whole thing instead of getting resolved, came not to an end, but rather a sort of irritating arrest.

2.1.1 INTERPRETATION OF CONCEPTS, TERMINOLOGY AND MEANINGS OF COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

In this section considerable attention has been paid to individual Policy Group member's description and understanding of what collaborative management meant to them. The aim has been to provide what came through as substantially significant for them in defining collaborative management and their attempts to explain associated terminology. The 'thick' descriptions given in attempting to describe collaborative management covered not just factual and superficial explanations, but also detailed the context, the emotion and the networks of social relationships that joined the Policy Group together. In many instances it could be seen to evoke an 'emotional struggle to explain' and generated 'self-feelings' bolstered by drawing upon their own significant experiences or a sequence of events.

The interpretation of these opening interview questions on 'what do you understand by collaborative management' thus opened up a range of very individual responses and different starting points. Where individuals' minds went in searching for an explanation, even though it was some fifteen months after the project had ended and whilst 'T' was still active as a 'going concern' confirmed the pluralism of meanings, and the grasping for something that could universally capture what collaborative management is and meant to them. The fact that some individuals described 'T's collaborative management as a more complex feature of the general management process, others as a response to the policy drivers or in behavioural terms or as a response to the call for innovation, others still, drilling down to the distinctions between their own role as autonomous Chief Executives and what was expected of them in their collaborative role all indicate the fact that the term is difficult to define in the abstract and its meaning is best conveyed grounded in a context of activity.
2.2 CEO PERSPECTIVES ON THE GROWTH OF UK ACADEMIC CONSORTIA

One of the principal questions of this research focuses on the external factors that have influenced the growth of academic consortia in the higher education sector and 'T' consortium in particular. This, in turn, gives an insight into the purpose, possibilities and parameters of the 'T' consortium and the CEO's embarkation on the 'Developing Collaborative Management Skills' project. The theme of the external influencing factors that account for the growth of consortia was pursued through the interviews with each CEO and their responses covered considerations of the policy context, the economic drivers of the higher education sector and specifically the opportunities to engage in collaborative agendas through consortium activity. An underlying question that seemed to surface for many of the CEOs was whether to embrace the collaborative agenda willingly and directly, and be seen to be overtly identified with it or to get embroiled with it indirectly in other ways.

The views expressed about the factors that accounted for the growth of academic consortia were many and various. They ranged from the attraction of critical mass and potential to lever resources, the existing constraints of scale on small institutions, the opportunities for doing something different and new, as well as the opportunities to secure lower costs from the market condition. The potential strength emanating from a peer group together with the resultant trust and understanding that can come from similarities, and indeed differences in a shared context were also suggested as compelling factors. Professor Searle cited one practical example of the consortium attraction for him in "borrowing" aspects of HR strategy from institutional colleagues, suggesting that he accrued special privileges from collaboration and building trust with colleagues.

Professor Diggins, in contrast, pointed to the research scenario, where a critical mass permitted better research than could be developed singly and across distributed sites. He referred to his own driver and experience six years previously, when interviewed for the post of CEO at Priory Institute and how explicit was the wish on the part of Priory Institute to grow collaborations. This, he interpreted, was due to the need for a small institution to gain a wider knowledge base and the emerging and pressing requirement to 'professionalise' its staff – a need that came not just from within the institution, but one that was increasingly apparent from the policy context. A consortium offered the opportunity for informal staff development and in some circumstances for formal teacher education. However, his view was that the current
most important factor accounting for the growth of consortia in UK higher education was now driven by the government White Paper and the HEFCE Strategic Plan and that this was one that had been on the horizon for some time.

Professor Avis' view on the growth of academic consortia was that they were a valuable mechanism for meeting the demands of collaboration. His view mirrored that of Professor Diggins in respect of current policy messages and with a paraphrased interpretation of the view of the HEFCE's Chief Executive Officer, he suggested that the message is:

\[\ldots\text{to give lots of money to research institutions and you, the rest of you, you must collaborate if you want to survive. Collaborating in a sense here, is not just in relation to consortia or merger, but specifically focused so that it covers all funding streams now. So the research stream says, you know, give it to the Russell Group, the rest of you can have something if you are going into various kinds of partnership, such as Centres of Excellence. We had our HEFCE visit yesterday and we were pushing and everything kept coming back to this - that there will be this pot of money for this, and this kind of money for that, providing we collaborate with other people.}\]

Professor Close also alluded to the Funding Council as a considerable factor in the growth of academic consortia suggesting that in respect of HEFCE's approach to collaboration specifically:

\[\text{underwriting the undertone of all of that is that if you don't collaborate you probably won't get very far, unless you are Oxford or Cambridge.}\]

Professor Moore thought that the political structure and the government interest in regional development (aping that of the European model), was a factor for the growth of consortia in UK higher education, particularly citing the economic and regeneration perspectives in the South East. In addition, he saw the US driver of the need to compete internationally (i.e. with the US) and the concentration of certain sorts of groupings such as research, teaching and learning or knowledge transfer as factors influencing the role of consortia in the global market. For the UK higher education agenda and specifically for specialist institutions, Professor Moore identified that there was:

\[\ldots\text{a sort of pressure from trying to compete with the North American model, so we're sort of like 'piggy in the middle' from those two pressures: Europe and the US}\]

Professor Pope had a very clear view on 'money, money, money' as a factor that accounted for the growth of consortia in the UK and talked about how more recently this had been written into the HEFCE Strategic Plan. Whilst he would like to think that consortia were formed from subject or disciplinary perspectives, he felt that the
better view was that they were being brought to bear either to get leverage into resources (e.g. research monies or other pots) or to transfer monies. He traced these reasons back to the global market:

...as opposed to an endemic will across the sector to seek partnerships which are exploratory, which might fail but what will add value to the discipline in the abstract.

These insights into the views of the CEOs on the external factors that account for academic consortia are aligned with the many views explored in the literature chapters and on the factors that contribute to the reasons why groups form academic consortia. They also point to the intersection of internal and external contexts that was identified in Chapter 1 as the place where the process of collaborative management best flourishes.

The interpretation therefore of the CEO responses suggest a very common preoccupation with the policy context and as had been noted earlier an emergent logic for collaboration in that all the institutions were in varying degrees small specialist and vulnerable. Their growing and acute awareness of the significance to them of the Funding Council and their relationship with it was both a binding and a compelling reason for engaging in a more proactive and focused strategy and taking a lead in promoting learning and understanding about collaborative management.

2.3 CEO PERSPECTIVES ON WHY THEY JOINED ‘T’

The second research question of this study asks how or why did ‘T’ and the collaborative management concept develop? – that is, what were the factors that attracted the Principals and CEOs to the idea of ‘T’ as a consortium. The CEO responses in this area of the interviews contribute further to an understanding of the purposes, possibilities and parameters as the context of collaborative management.

The analysis of the CEO responses, firstly reflect the views of the original ‘founding fathers’ from the four institutions and then the later members in chronological order. It is hoped that by examining their reasons in this way, some kind of common pattern other than that of the external environment might emerge. However before proceeding to a consideration of this, it must be remembered that of the original four CEO’s whose views appear first, Professor Pope had moved from Coundon Institute, the founding institution of ‘T’ to be CEO of Holyhead Institute, the fifth institution to
join ‘T’. In the meantime Professor Avis had become CEO of the original founder member, Coundon Institute.

The analysis thus starts with a comment from Professor Pope relating to his former capacity at Coundon as an Executive Manager there, but his comments about Holyhead in his capacity as CEO are reserved until later in the analysis.

In his interview, Professor Pope, as founding Chair of ‘T’ and as a senior executive at Coundon at the time, spoke from his particular perspective at Coundon, before moving some eighteen months into ‘T’s ‘lifetime’ to become CEO of Holyhead Institute. He clearly articulated his strategic intent: when ‘T’ was formulated: the aspirations for Coundon were to become a fulcrum around which a university of the arts in the south of England could be articulated. This vision and motivation would certainly be anticipating developments in the higher education sector, and would be an example of Hamel and Prahalad’s strategic intent, manifested as ‘folding back the future into the present’. Professor Pope expressed his view as follows:

...that was what you know, was driving me quietly, and I was surprised that the new Chief Executive of Coundon Institute didn’t actually get it immediately and play with the group.

Professor Searle’s strategic intent in joining ‘T’ was expressed as one of building upon the similarities and range of experience of ‘T’ partners, together with access to a relevant network that would help staff development. He aimed to develop collaborative capability and particularly pointed to the sharing of best practice through the range of interest groups and at the annual collaborative conferences for partner institutions. However, his broader perspective indicated that the combination of drivers attracting him were not limited to these and related to the changing map of higher education and the dwindling number of specialist institutions, particularly:

I think we can’t conceal the neurosis. The detachment of being Chief Executives in a specialist institution is like being part of an ‘endangered species’. There were, I’m not sure how many there were decades ago... I could speculate 40-45 institutions and now there are only 11 or so. So there are some things we’re doing that is sort of preserving, as opposed to something they did which was damning. So I think that sensitivity encourages that linking together. ²

² This can be compared with the comments of Dame Janet Trotter speaking at The Council of Church Colleges second national conference where she referred to the fact that in 1973 there were 51 Church Colleges, in 1985 there were 2 left, and in 2001 only 15 were still functioning. Trotter, J (2001) The UK Church Colleges: Their Past, Present and Future in Collaboration for Distinctiveness: strengthening the networks, p.12, Proceedings of the national conference held at St Mary’s College, Strawberry Hill, September 2002

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Continuing on this theme of neurosis as one of the drivers for joining 'T' and the kind of behaviours that this can generate in the collaborative context, Professor Searle stated:

...because the specialist centre can be overly neurotic, this can be a driver towards multiple collaborations, some of which are very diluted, which is many friends with lots of people because you never know who’s going to be your enemy, and I think that is a problem for 'T': that is, that when as a 'T' member we are discussing an initiative, I imagine that some members could be in pretty active conversations with other bidders and may well flaw the case of 'T' by virtue of a 'T' member playing at an away match...I think this is very special to a specialist institution. They have lived so long on the margins that they haven't the nerve to play as a team.

Professor Diggins' view about 'T' was that it was special and attractive because of the opportunities and the ability:

...of Chief Executives to talk about shared issues, those in the UK higher education context, and for small specialist institutions to talk about the special relationships they have with external agencies.

This was important to him because of its operation on two levels:
Firstly, if you go back to the beginning of 'T' one of the impressive things was that the 'T' Co-ordinator worked in every institution, and that was something 'special'. The presence created by the 'T' Co-ordinator having an existence in each institution said actually a lot more than each CEO sitting around the table. Secondly, the interest groups and what they could add to my institution was important.

What made the prospect of joining 'T' attractive to Professor Close was the opportunity that it offered an opportunity to be part of a 'win-win' situation. He qualified this by saying 'in the early days'. Although the 'T' Heads of Agreement was a voluntary agreement to form and bond together, very quickly a number of collaborative opportunities came along (HEFCE special initiative funding for widening participation, higher education reach-out to business and the community, developing good management practice) that gave a second opportunity apart from bidding in an institutional capacity.

*I mean, if you can have two bites of the cherry that seems to be to be a very good driver, plus the fact that I knew that I couldn’t offer everything that I wanted to offer from Bryanstone. I knew I'd have to work with someone in order to deliver it.*

In the sequence of Holyhead Institute becoming the fifth member of 'T', Professor Pope related what he had subsequently read in the paper that went to the governors of the Institute about the case for membership of 'T' in December 1999. The then CEO:

...had just quoted from me (as Chair of 'T'), had talked about improved critical mass and so on. When I look at it now, and I've uncovered some of the
archives of Holyhead over the two years before I arrived, it's back to money again. There is a condition in the contract of premium fund... that says that the Institute must seek out suitable alliances. So it's a tick box, you tick the box, you say we've done that – that one is put to bed. I have had to drive the 'T' agenda along very hard at Holyhead, but now the majority are in my place and are on board.

The attraction to 'T' from Sunnybank Institute was more serendipitous: a reflection of the personal interest expressed by the CEO. Professor Rhodes was very conscious of the fact that Sunnybank would not have joined if it had not been for the fact that as CEO he had an art school background, and his joining 'T' was expressed in terms of the institution "humouring him"

I don't think it would have occurred to them. It absolutely wouldn't have grabbed them at all. My institution has kind of humoured me by saying 'we'll let Kim go along with this – it's only the subscription, what else could we do with that, you know'. And then the managerial types in institutional functions have respected the people they've found in 'T'...

Whilst coming from a world that was all about collaboration, Professor Rhodes' biography was one that meant he was new to higher education. His background was running festivals and arts centres that:

...are all about multi-disciplinary work and collaboration. Everything there, has been about stitching people together and trying to find ways of getting them to work together, like two plus two makes five as it should.

A considerable amount of the music business and profession is determined by some form or collaboration either with film or television, in dance work or in opera or ballet:

You are collaborating with other practitioners and other art forms and that is something which conservatoires of music, have of late (of late being the last 100 years or so) not done well. They've been through a period of specialisation and I think this is an interesting point now in terms of the whole collaborative agenda. We live in a society which is absolutely driven by specialist expertise and yet there's also a desire for a much more holistic approach, and those two things have got to live side by side.

The case of Professor Avis has to be understood in the light of the fact that he was in the unique situation of being the one CEO to 'inherit' a collaborative relationship after 'T' had been in operation for some nine months. This, had to be exacerbated by the fact that when he arrived as new CEO at Coundon Institute, he was to find that his Deputy Director had been the 'chief architect' in forming 'T', was the incumbent Chair, and that as CEO of Coundon, Professor Avis was to have a seat at the table with five neighbouring CEOs. It was thus interesting to gain Professor Avis' perspective, and especially as changing membership of key champions within a collaborative is likely to be not an uncommon occurrence in collaborative life.
Professor Avis spoke of the coherence of ‘T’s formation, although instead of being only four institutions “I would have wanted it to be five”. This was taken as a reference to Earlsdon Institute’s later joining of ‘T’ and where strong personal bonds between these two CEOs had always been evident. Professor Avis gave an enthusiastic pledge of support for the concept of ‘T’:

...I probably would have not only joined, but wanted to lead it. I mean, part of my problem has been to do with not being in at the beginning when it was created, and I have been placed in a frustrating position in that respect. Although the institution has been placed as the lead institution, I didn’t feel that we were and also I hadn’t initiated it. I wanted to lead and have power – they go together – yeah that’s a very revealing statement.

As a final affirmation about the efficacy of ‘T’ Professor Avis stated:

I do genuinely believe that the setting up of ‘T’ was an astute move and it still continues to present an alternative one to many kinds of models. I think that this is really important, not just as a protective device, but as an alternative - which is a difficult alternative and one that I think might pre-empt various questions. As such we’ve had a difficult couple of years and that is really important - that is, important to the sector to know that this is difficult and that we are all particularly learning about this.

Professor Moore, as CEO of Earlsdon Institute, the seventh partner to join ‘T’ some sixteen months after it started business, acknowledged his disappointment that they were not in at the beginning. What was attractive to him, was not so much what he termed ‘Gradgrind’, (opportunities for sharing best practice and how things are done in a very mechanical way, although he acknowledged for Finance Directors and HR Managers this was a ‘terrific opportunity’), but the prospect of clustering around the ‘academic agendas’:

... I thought the most interesting thing is about a common approach to how one taught people to produce creative artefacts, how we approach creative arts events, the teaching and learning approaches and the research approaches and there has been a little bit of progress on the research front. I was more interested in how we could get ‘value added’ in terms of the content because of our teaching and learning and research work.

For Professor Moore, what was also particularly attractive about ‘T’ was expressed as follows:

I think the key thing in it are the specialist institutions – creative arts institutions who are facing similar pressures and similar challenges, and who therefore have an opportunity here of sharing best practice. That’s its strength. Its key strength is to share best practice, follow best practice and work with people who are facing the same issues as yourself.
2.4 SUMMARY AND COMMENTARY

From the above CEO views it can be seen that an initial assessment on the purpose, possibilities and parameters of ‘T’ collaborative management indicates emerging consensus areas in broad terms (such as the inescapable political and economic drivers, the fact that a collaborative would offer opportunity in some shape or form and that by seizing the initiative ‘T’ could be ahead of the game and offer an innovative solution to a set of specialist institutions who were feeling the chill of the winds of change). However, in terms of the ‘what’ (managing the content), the ‘how’ (managing the context) and the ‘how to’ (managing the process of collaboration) a less clear picture emerged and even about ‘purpose’ when skimming the surface the ‘why’ of the association. Differing emphases and importance on matters stemming from (what the ‘Developing Collaborative Management Skills’ facilitator had identified as) ‘Artist Principals’ or ‘Managerial Principals’ emerged early on. This combined with a ‘founding fathers’/‘later members’ divide as well as the required shift in learning and practice from ‘autonomous’ Chief Executives to strategic collaborative leadership from around the table and the attendant ‘institutional leadership agendas and mindsets’ brought to the table, would suggest big challenges.

3.0 COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT SKILLS

The third related research question in this research asks about the practices and skills that have emerged in supporting collaborative management through the collective learning by the ‘T’ Policy Group. The subsequent analysis of responses to the areas of questioning highlights the tableaux of experiences, practices and skills that together suggest complexity and the multi-faceted interfaces involved in the collaborative management process.

The interview prompts ranged from asking about individual CEO past histories and involvement (if any) with other collaborations through to the skills employed by them in both their institutional and their newly acquired ‘collaborative management’ function within ‘T’. It explored with them how they set about positioning and planning for ‘T’ and began to examine the part that personalities, perceptions and perspectives played in collaborative management as well as the skills demands of dealing with events that fired particular emotions. The questions evoked responses on a range of performance issues that would be familiar to them in a traditional leadership role, such as decision making and scanning the environment to achieve competitive advantage, through to the shifting emphases of achieving mutual understanding.
engendering trust and embedding strategic and operational objectives in a collaborative setting.

3.1 CEO PAST HISTORIES OF COLLABORATIVE CONTEXTS

In the interviews with each CEO, it was thought interesting to discover their prior knowledge and experience of working collaboratively apart from in ‘T’. This yielded information about their background experience in collaboration, but also indicated how they gauged their experiences of and within ‘T’ and invited comparisons with other forms of relational activity that they had been engaged with previously. Most felt that they had prior experience of collaboration, either in University settings in the UK (Professors Searle; Diggins; Avis) or internationally (Professors Moore; Rhodes) and in the case of Professor Pope, in a particular merger setting which led to the current composition of Coundon Institute on two sites. However, apart from Professor Moore, all seemed to suggest that ‘T’ was something new for them and a much more personal and focused venture than had been encountered previously.

Professor Searle referred to his experience as a Dean for a number of years at the London Institute (now the University of the Arts, London) as something that could broadly be compared with ‘T’. His work there was described as “not in what was overtly stated as a ‘federal’ organisation”, but similarly he felt it was not a central one. In that particular environment he had become used to both the concepts of ‘collaboration and competition’ side by side in a working context, and he summarised that working environment as being “singly secured, but having a very competitive arm”. He viewed his current involvement with another collaborative body, that of CHEAD (Confederation of Higher Education Art & Design Institutions) as more akin to being part of an ‘association’ and one where its management had formerly been ‘looser’ than with ‘T’. At one point in its history he described CHEAD as “really nothing more than a chat shop” although it was now refocused and ‘being managed’ so that objectives were fully discussed and could secure more effective outcomes. Contrasting CHEAD with ‘T’ he felt that ‘T’ was much smaller and ‘tighter’ and because of what it had set itself up to do, it had a corresponding need to be clear about where it was going. Whilst acknowledging that “management isn’t an end in itself,” Professor Searle’s view was that in comparison to CHEAD, ‘T’ had from the outset:

...exhibited more of a sense of where it’s going, even if that is more sense of where it’s not going.
Professor Diggins had also worked at another college within the University of the Arts, but chose to illustrate his involvement in collaborative settings with that of Priory Institute’s validating university with which it was federated and was publicly recognised as such. However, his view was that an ‘associate college’ only status (which was the relationship Priory Institute had) was not the same as his relationship within ‘T’. He conceded, however, that there still had to be a powerful rationale for the collaboration in the first place, whatever the relationship. In Priory’s case, the association with its validating university was one that was academically driven.

In contrast to those who said that they had some experience of collaboration, Professor Close acknowledged that his was very limited. The experience of ‘T’ as a collaborative was described in the following terms:

It’s a completely new experience. I came from another specialist institution and we didn’t collaborate with anyone on anything! So coming to Bryanstone, it seemed to me to be one of the basics. Certainly one looks for collaborations initially between one’s geographic neighbours and the first I attempted never got off the ground. So the idea of non-geographic neighbours, but around discipline, a similar disciplinary network seemed to be something very interesting. Certainly it was new to me.

3.2. THE EMERGENCE OF A COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT SKILL SET

The portfolio of skills for collaborative management that were referred to by the CEOs during the interview process were many and varied and again echoed themes that have been considered in the foregoing section. They included those areas that are immediately recognisable as traditional rational leadership/management practices and challenges, such as purpose, planning, performance and positioning the organisation, as well as decision making and management of conflict. In addition, a number of skills emerged that were referenced explicitly in the context of the shift from managing autonomously to managing collaboratively which the ‘Developing Collaborative Management Skills’ set out to explore. Other skills became apparent from the CEOs recounting their experiences of the collaborative setting more generally. Together these set of skills comprise those that can be described as the ‘pith’ of collaborative management.

3.2.1 A COMMON PURPOSE

Although ‘purpose’ featured as part of the first section in the analysis of these interviews and was referred to many times in attempting to clarify what is meant by
the concept of collaborative management, it makes a reappearance here as a key skill or practice of collaborative relationships mentioned by each CEO. This is not unexpected as ‘purpose’ (or strategic intent) threads its way as a central theme throughout collaborative management and is demonstrated in both the account in Chapter 8 and in the analysis of the field interviews in this chapter.

Being clear about ‘purpose’ lies at the heart of leadership. In the collaborative setting its significance is deeper and is more about discovering the enduring ‘sense of purpose’ or in the case of this research, the strategic intent of ‘T’. If the sense of purpose is the internal compass combining elements of mission and vision with a force of core values, the direction that stems from it is the immediate intention, aim or goal – i.e. the desired objective or set of objectives. Underpinning this is the will, the drive, determination, energy and effort to make things happen. It is the force that translates impulses and directions into practice.

In the interviews, there were common references about what it was that ‘T’ was clustering around and to the concerted efforts to find the ‘glue’ that would cement the collaborative in the long term. Professor Searle spoke about the missed opportunity of clustering around the goal of achieving degree awarding powers – something he felt that was achievable and especially as “the door was open” with the approach from XYHE, the External Consultants undertaking the Strategic Review.

When [they] were talking about it pretty openly, I think there was an opportunity – I don’t think it will necessarily be harder now, but we won’t be original...

He also believed in the importance of being able to talk about the next stage in ‘T’s development as part of its purpose. ‘T’ needed to continue moving forward and at the same time Professor Searle hoped that the external agenda would remain true to what encouraged the members to collaborate in the first place. However, this was usually being read in the light of the institution’s needs rather than it being driven from the centre. It was a fact that the operation of ‘T’ did not suggest what Professor Searle referenced as a:

...firmness of brief. It hasn’t got the lubricant that will allow its day-to-day operation – i.e. you will think collaboratively rather than institutionally. The Policy Group stay operational in the collaborative setting rather than strategic, which is a cliché, but that’s the touchstone isn’t it? When I opened my stuff from HEFCE this morning, what did I think of first ‘T’ or ‘Ashdown’? I think Ashdown and I think that’s a fact and quite an important thing and I would wish to think more ‘T’. Whilst I still remain as committed to it because I believe in it, I think it’s got to have more verification.
It can be argued therefore, that in seeking its purpose 'T' had taken its eye off the big picture and Professor Searle's view was that the consortium failed to be sufficiently strategic about where it was going. 'T' had become overtly tempted to respond to environmental and immediate agendas so that the original purpose had become diluted:

_The external agenda has changed so that our original association isn't the one that we now have. I think for 'T' to pluralise around arts and not just art & design is very ambitious. I think actually 'the subject' is quite an important driver. The London Conservatoire issue lurks and while it obviously doesn't affect many, but it does affect some of our colleagues._

For Professor Close, however, it was only the work that was undertaken by 'T' that could provide the 'glue' that was being talked about. He had shared in 'T' since it was 'a germ of an idea' and obviously had many discussions that were not on record about its potential. He acknowledged that he had difficulty in articulating clearly what 'T's purpose was, but acknowledged that by the time of this interview:

...events have overtaken us and because of that we haven't got anything. You know 'T' was on a cusp of getting something really good and organised and we have been overtaken by events. There was something there that we could have used and at the moment I have great difficulty in describing what we would have had there to begin to tailor events.

Professor Close referred to both external and circumstances that had affected 'T'. The consortium could no longer be made sense of in terms of the many White Paper agendas and institutional impacts that would now be emerging. Similarly, internal 'hits' such as the Chair changing from the largest institution to one of the smallest within 'T' as well as the arrival of a new CEO at Coundon (who had to be brought up to speed) were significant unanticipated events. In respect of the 'glue' that was being worked upon in the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project:

...there just wasn't enough of 'T' to hold and contain those changes, so that it didn't impact too negatively....you know the idea was that 'T' could be a bastion against being asked to do this, that and the other [by HEFCE] because of our collaboration... It's not lost, but I think it needs quite drastic surgery and a new vision of what it should be doing. This, I think could be a small group, perhaps the inner group deciding to do this, actually doing it and making it happen.

The skill of identifying purpose and the early assimilation of different CEO imaginations in order to manage and grow a consortium was an important factor to

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3 The London Conservatoire's formation supported with HEFCE funding was announced from a platform by Sir Brian Fender, then CEO of HEFCE at a national Cooperation and Collaboration conference in January 2001. It had significant implications for the performing arts institutions within 'T' who were outside of it, and the Chair of 'T' subsequently referred to its entrance as an arrival that was "boiler plated and copper bottomed" indicating the support that this venture had been given priority in order to ensure its viability, sustenance and survival.
Professor Diggins. He referred to the different reasons that CEOs might have entered 'T' and 'how hard it was to put your finger on the common purpose of what it is you’re doing’ in the 'T' context. However, he would do it again if he felt that there was sufficient central vision about:

…what and why those people were coming together. Four years on, I’m still not sufficiently clear about what it is that brought us together.

Professor Diggins contrasted this lack of clarity with his membership and experience of research consortia, where it was comparatively easy to identify research preferences. However, within 'T’:

...this business about having a real rationale for the collaboration, you could argue is that it needs a very sharp focus. But when ‘T’ was set up it didn’t have this, so that it didn’t send a very clear message. It wasn’t very clear about the parameters, about what it was set up to do and what could be terribly measurable. It has been successful on so many levels, but when you come to the shared identity it is very interesting. When you say, what were the motives, they are probably very different...

This idea of ‘T' being over-ambitious about the scale and scope of its agendas was one that had been identified by one of HEFCE’s Regional Consultants when the idea was first being generated, and some six years later when talking with a subsequent Regional Consultant he spoke of the almost precocious attitude of ‘T’ in thinking that it would be able to mirror all of HEFCE’s agendas⁴. Professor Avis also thought that it was ‘tricky' for seven CEOs collectively, as 'T', to attempt to diagnose the current policy context and somewhat idealistic to engage in a paper exercise telling a story so that after a period of time ‘T’ would be perfectly positioned for when the White Paper came out, complete with ready-made solutions to the various possibilities. At the end of the day, his conclusion was that ‘purpose’

...is and remains problematic for ‘T’. We've struggled hard to try and create a common purpose and in the end, I felt we had achieved something when we got to the point where we agreed that there might be some different purposes and that small groupings might want to cover what some people wanted. I thought that was actually a way forward, but that seems to have perhaps, maybe fallen away.

Professor Pope on the other hand, was clear that when 'T’ was formed, he shared with the other three members:

... a recognition that there could be models of collaboration that would ‘add-value’ across the board, but at that time there was no hard nor soft pressure. It was an idea and therefore, it was our vision. Now you know about how it turns out in practice – people will run with their own ideas and put a lot of

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⁴ Comparison of email response from HEFCE SE Regional Consultant of October 1998 and comments made in meeting between Chair of ‘T’, ‘T’ Co-ordinator and subsequent HEFCE SE Regional Consultant in 2004

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energy into it. If those ideas are then translated into policy from a different direction, then suddenly what you are doing with enthusiasm and great interest becomes driven by a third party and the reaction becomes 'hang on a minute, you know, I don't quite like that feeling'.

There were two dimensions involved here: the first that the original four members, Ashdown, Bryanstone, Coundon and Priory Institute had voluntarily agreed a vision, or at least a set of strategic objectives to which they could work and which they owned. The suggestion might be that with the new tranche of members there was not the same 'buy-in' or commitment to the agendas that the original members had been party to. The second dimension, was that although in discussion with HEFCE over agendas (because it was vital to have Funding Council support for the initiative of 'T' and later for the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project), the whole hearted adoption, approval and indeed championing of the model by HEFCE together with the corresponding embrace of it through the policy context, undermined the attractiveness of it to some members, and particularly to the new members. There is thus a paradox that collaborative management can and will work if left to its own devices to grow organically (noted in Chapter 9 and confirmed here) but resistance will appear and retrenchment may set in if it is sanctioned and actively promoted by an outside agency.

Professor Pope did not fundamentally believe that the desire for collaboration is a natural phenomenon. He recalled that the original design of 'T' was a consequence of and related to the dynamic of the four personalities that shaped it in the beginning:

I remember the conversations we had with HEFCE at that time that reduced the fears and then it was the understanding of the four executives involved that allowed it to travel in the way that it did. It started to come apart when the dynamic changed, that is, it wasn't that the model didn't hold up.

He continued talking about 'purpose' by comparing collaborations and collaborative management in 'T' with those exemplars in the business sector. These permit collaboration on one particular front because there is mutual gain, but where one is also able to 'compete like mad' on other fronts because through competition there is also mutual gain. Within 'T', he was of the opinion that:

We are all competing to grow or we were at one point. Right now, how do we use that competition? What we did, those of us who were sensible, we said 'right let's map what we've got. Let us use our joint databases to demonstrate need, let's make sure that we don't compete in our bids and in so doing each institution is successful in that it did grow and in growing competed successfully against other member institutions within 'T'. And that's mutuality, sensible mutuality. It's not just mutuality that works, but it's a mutuality of a business plan.
Professor Rhodes spoke about his purpose for Sunnybank in being part of 'T'. This was partly 'as a wing of protection to the merger culture'. He felt confident that he had avoided an externally imposed merger because of voluntarily exercising his intention to establish Sunnybank as the first music and dance conservatoire, by virtue of its agreed merger with a smaller institution. He also identified that:

_There are certain people who come to 'T' because there's a very real sense of similarity of scale and empathy for each other. But then there are others who are probably in a number of big membership conglomerates who basically see it as a professional club. So those issues haven't been fully resolved._

Of particular significance was his observation that the purpose of collaboration, and hence of collaborative management was one of being 'amid kindred spirits and amongst friends'. However, he noted that with regard to purpose there had been a shift for 'T' CEO's who were originally artistically driven to now looking at quasi-political and management focused agendas in collaborative management.

Perhaps one of the most insightful observations that Professor Rhodes made referred to his perception of the motivations and purposes for which individual CEOs and their institutions were drawn to 'T':

_... from where they've come from, they are quite manically joined together in the spirit of preserving their independence, so they're not joined together to be together but joined together to remain detached_

The responses to questions and prompts exploring the sensitising issue of 'purpose' as a component of collaborative management can be interpreted in many meaningful ways, each making sense. The dominant view that emerged from the experiential learning of those interviewed, appeared to be the purpose in terms of 'finding the glue' that would cement the collaborative in the long term and thus lead to its continued development and sustainability. This was both complicated by the individual desires of what each wanted from the collaborative and the need to balance the institution's needs (Searle). There was a firmness of brief collectively given to 'T' that allowed day-to-day operation of the collaborative and at the same time permitted it to be authoritative, flexible and responsive to the external environmental and immediate higher education sector agenda - speaking collectively on behalf of each institution. Attempts to look back historically about what brought the partnership into being - the unfolding directions of the way that 'T' travelled as a result of conscious decision making, (expanding to double its size within its first fifteen months of operation) serendipitous happenings ('T' being in the right place at the right time) and unintended consequences (such as the move of the Chair from...
the largest 'T' member to one of the smallest) did not point to any one single success
factor, or one single crystallising factor that spelt failure. Many cautionary tales and
perspectives were, however, offered by the CEOs.

3.2.2 COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT SKILLS OF PLANNING, POSITIONING &
PERFORMANCE

The core characteristics of setting strategy, pointing the way to the future and
ensuring the CEO Policy Group worked well in terms of organisation and quality of
the work, contributes to an assessment of their overall performance and their ability
to please both themselves and their complex set of stakeholders. Because 'T' aimed
to craft a culture of innovation among other things, the imperative for the Policy
Group was to develop leadership skills in the collaborative management setting – a
task made difficult because of the partnership anomaly, where apart from the Chair,
no party has strong control or authority. The skills identified by the CEOs in working
collaboratively included influence, understanding and negotiation and this suggests
that this is where the leadership skills acquired in the collaborative context can make
a difference to success or failure. Professor Close suggested that for him there was
a primary skill of:

...understanding our peers and what I am to expect from them and how to
move forward with them. I have a much better understanding of who/what
they are and what they value, so in a sense, really, it's the understanding of
my peers that is the skill I would not have had. There's no other context in
which I could have got so close to them.

In addition, the skills of negotiation, decision making, managing conflict and
engendering trust were all mentioned by the CEOs in terms of their performance in
the collaborative management setting.

(a) Negotiation

Negotiation through shared activity was expressed as an important skill for Professor
Searle, although he was not always clear about what or with whom he was actually
negotiating:

I am negotiating with something and I form part of that, but of course it's
actually a process of interacting with a number of things, and in that context I
think the value of collaboration, which is working together is not unlike the
objective for my own institution. Something has to be secured, and as a
consequence requires you to manage components to get the very best from
it. So I think managing collaboration is an extremely important thing and one
should not assume that collaboration manages itself.

The question of who members of 'T' were negotiating with, that is whether it was the
bi-lateral relationship between the institution and 'T' or between individual institutions
was one that cropped up in the responses of others, e.g. Professor Rhodes, Professor Diggins. These sometimes suggested the perspective of 'T' as a mechanism for the furtherance of institutional self-interest, rather than a wholehearted commitment and embrace of something new and innovative where institutions would be willing to take risk and give up something in the pursuit of gaining something more.

For Professor Diggins, behaviour in managing 'T' was reminiscent of working within a committee structure where you have play to strengths and sensitivities, and be aware of the gain for each of the partners:

...it's that sense of having to hold back as you know you can see a way through, but you have to employ the negotiating skills and all of that as somewhat central to the proposal. This is very difficult compared to the easiness within an institution where as Chief Executive you have a huge amount of autonomy and responsibility and can give a single steer to the kind of outcome. This is not in quite the same way within a consortium.

Professor Diggins felt that there had been learning in terms of negotiation skills in the collaborative setting:

We've all learnt to negotiate. We've learnt to understand, to respect that person, to know what's due to them and where and when to pursue something at length, when the goals were possible and the extent to which collaborative ideals were unrealistic. We need to learn to be much clearer about the extent to which collaborative management could be.

While acknowledging that there has to be something that contrasts with the competitive backdrop, for example, a management style that people can respond to or a softer approach, the need for affirmation of the consortium through 'win-win' situations remains. This is apparent from the platform of writing and gaining funding through successful bids, but in the strategic setting where they maybe competition 'T' could only achieve this in Professor Searle's opinion if:

members are prepared to compromise more here and there and take a long-term view.

He additionally had quite a cynical view of the motivation behind the consortium and believed that while 'T' was undoubtedly:

...a close association – it does have a lot of confidence in itself and between its members, but it isn't driven by collaboration.

Highlighting an example of where there was a failure to collaborate, or even to start the discussions because it was too much of a risk or challenge to autonomy, he cited the failure to take up the idea of a federal model of collaboration. Some members
had not shown interest in this suggestion for 'T' and it was thought that this was because:

...some felt 'no' because they did not wish to compromise any of their own autonomy or the options they were keeping open elsewhere. Secondly, I think for some, the relationship between the principal/CEO and the governing body is quite varied and very interesting around the group. I think that is something actually that's more likely to pall – those that feel that with 'T' their governance would go.

The difficulties of this made it even more important to have a strategic plan and to avoid what Professor Searle termed as 'collaborative arrest'

The difficulty of negotiation with CEO 'peers' of equal status and who all enjoyed individual autonomy in their institutional capacity was set out by Professor Avis of Coundon. Speaking about the behaviour required in a collaborative setting, he said the following:

As Chief Executives we tend to probably get away with murder. We tend, because we're all bosses, you know, we're used to all the people doing things for us and each us sometimes can behave in a cavalier fashion... I think this is all relevant to the concept of management and how one might think of management. But in the context of 'T' it's almost as if you throw it all out of the window.

In dealing with other people of equal status Professor Avis was acutely aware that collaborative management challenged his capacity to contribute as a manager to 'T'. He was very conscious of the skills he had acquired over the years and that he continued to acquire and use. However, within the 'T' context these skills did not translate well to the collaborative management context:

I sometimes do the exact opposite in the context of 'T' because of the nature of 'T' - it impacts on one's behaviour which is ultimately, but not necessarily always compromising the box of skills you have. This, I think is quite important and quite challenging actually because of the stretch of skills. You have to stretch and learn as a senior manager to present yourself.

Although a very individual view, Professor Avis continued to talk about the different approach to skills in the operation of collaborative management within 'T' that were demanded of 'you as a person' when thinking collaboratively:

It demands a shift of perspective, which if you're not motivated, if you're not in agreement with any aspect of it, then you can't always place yourself in a position where you can see that perspective, or you want to see that perspective. So you therefore tend to step back and perhaps entrench yourself again in your institutional position. So that is requiring a shift of perspective – what else is it?
Negotiation skills employed in the collaborative management setting were often about reaching a particular decision, and about the next course of action to be taken. In the 'T' setting this required consensus decision making - a model adopted that was thought best, but one that did not accommodate the scenario where one or more members disagreed. The question was one then of whether the dissenting voice had the power of veto, or whether the dissenting voice(s) could be persuaded to step outside the circle, so that those who were still inside the circle could go ahead in order to reach a consensus decision. Thus the skill of decision making in the collaborative was important to the performance of the consortium and was inextricably linked with the complex medley of self-interest, and balance, of giving up something to gain something more as well as processes that were fair and equitable in 'T', but not necessarily always equal.

Professor Searle in this context spoke about how effective or otherwise he thought 'T' had been in this area. He favoured the European Union model of 'subsidiarity' that enabled member states in their context and partner institutions in the 'T' context to take a different view and to step outside the consensus without a particular view. Professor Searle noted that 'T' did not have an active voting system, having failed to 'bite this particular bullet' and in any event this would only work where there was a sense of 'sovereignty' (that he feared did not exist). He observed that:

The power is particularly with the individual institutions and it is nice when they come together in consensus...... but if they came together in majority/minority I'm fearful that the minority might split off and that a consensus organisation may not be possible to transform into a majority organisation

This interview discussion led back to issues of institutions 'playing at home' (bidding through 'T' and 'playing away from home' – i.e. shaping proposals with other partners outside of the Consortium) and especially in the light of minority interests. As Professor Rhodes importantly identified, different institutions had different interests, and different time frames in terms of their expectations about collaborative management. He cited the example of the pacing of recruitment numbers where it was apparent that Holyhead and Sunnybank share similarities of extra premium funding. However, because of the different disciplinary bases of institutions there existed tensions that made it difficult to reconcile and satisfy the direction of 'T':

I think we have realised that the art and design element of 'T' is still the most powerful part of it and the performing side, although now strengthened with newer members will be strengthened even further by the presence of the dance dimension.
The impact of being able to negotiate effectively he felt was tied in with the depth of commitment to 'T' and Professor Rhodes voiced his fears about 'T' not being able to deliver what he had anticipated:

*We were moving very well at one stage toward understanding and now I think we've kind of pulled back because it's clear that people are looking in different directions. They want to keep the club atmosphere together, but they're thinking, I might not be in here much longer because something else is going to happen to me.*

What appeared to come through the interviews with both Professors Searle and Rhodes, (although it was not stated explicitly) was a recognition that in the decision making context, some partners appeared to be acting as a 'sheet anchor' to slow things down when it was not in their interest to remain active in discussions. This behaviour inevitably caused frustration, and exacerbated matters because 'T' did not grab the opportunity to put in place mechanisms to deal with this emerging behaviour. Within a single institutional context and in a traditional hierarchical structure such action might have been easy to impose, but the impact and repercussions of this amongst a group of peer CEOs posed a more delicate and complex set of circumstances to deal with.

The whole question of decision-making was often intricately bound up with the issues of autonomy. Professor Close's frustrations were apparent:

*... you know you manage an institution pretty well and have an awareness that you could make what you feel should happen, happen. In collaborative management context it's much more of negotiation with your peers about what is going to happen and therefore you have to put a stronger case, and I suspect this is because authority just doesn't work.*

He continued:

*When in a way you have got people putting autonomy before anything else, the way to get round that perhaps is by some more formal agreement. Where there is peer pressure on institutions to avoid putting autonomy first, because I think this is something they wouldn't do naturally, if they had an agreed option not to do it, then you might just get a different result.*

The consensual decision-making model presented significant constraints for Professor Close who was a firm advocate of the majority voting system. He was of the view that consensus decision making might work when you had two or three people involved, but it was impossible to sustain when you have a multi-lateral relationship among seven colleagues. He was interested in exploring more about US models, such as the Five Colleges Consortium and felt that:

*Behind that model is quite a formal structure, so in a way, the way we make decisions has had a huge impact on what we've not been able to achieve.*
The decision-making process is something that is central otherwise how do you move forward? Otherwise you’ll end up with consensus being a common denominator and when that is not achieved fully, we can’t move forward.

With regard to shifts in autonomy achieved through the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project, Professor Searle was of the view that there had been some movement, but in loosening autonomous decision making the focus through the consortium was on sharing information rather than collaboratively managing and making executive decisions:

...I think there’s still autonomy. I think we probably share what we’re going to do, but we manage inequitably.

The implications of this were that although there was a ‘collaborativeness’ that derived from sharing better practice, early intelligence about certain pieces of information left an individual CEO informed about a peer’s intentions but wondering what to do with the information and ‘what does this mean for ‘T’.’ It was problematic when there was early involvement through the sharing of information about an individual institution’s intentions, and when it was not clear or apparent whether it was appropriate for the collective ‘T’ to be engaged with it. In Professor Searle’s opinion there remained a “somewhat schizophrenic approach that individual members had to adopt” because information was constantly getting reframed in the light of the individual institution rather than it being incorporated into and then driven from the centre, so as to form a collective view and platform for decision making.

An interesting view on decision making and the need to suspend the institutional perspective was given by Professor Pope because of his particular constraints of acting as Chair of ‘T’:

I often kept on being more and more neutral in relation to projects and operations and perhaps focusing the group going back to the Heads of Terms and the potential and offer of ‘T’ without always thinking first about my institution.

The manner in which decisions were made and whether they addressed people’s sensitivities in terms of an appropriate timescale also emerged as a matter of comment. Professor Moore, reflecting on this, thought that engagement in the collaborative management of ‘T’ had developed in:

...rather an odd sort of way in which we do come to meetings to collaboratively manage, but there are other things going on between the meetings, between the CEOs. Either they aren’t brought forward to meetings or there are things that we don’t do anything about, or there are things to be done now. I know that if things crop up you’ve got to make a decision and so
on, but it just seems to become a bit of a bone of contention for us. There have been some of these things developing and you feel you've been rushed into them, or decisions have been made about this or there's been something said in discussion and I don't think that works.

(c) Managing Conflict

In relation to managing conflict, there emerged a marked reluctance both about dealing with it and about an appropriate timing for intervention. The direct question, put to CEOs was what happened when you disagreed with something? This was followed up in interview by a prompt about whether there was anything so significant that members considered leaving the partnership. These questions elicited responses both with regard to the type of behaviours that were fostered when there was dissatisfaction or where there had been conflict, as well as observations about how effectively these processes were managed within 'T'.

Professor Avis, for example, thought that the Policy Group did not know 'how to have a good fight' and believed that the consensus decision making model in 'T' often operated through 'consensus by silence,' that is, through individual members choosing not to voice their dissenting views. Thus custom and practice grew that if there was no 'identifiable objection' to matters under discussion then this could be taken as agreement — a pragmatic solution in order to sustain the momentum for consortia activity and to evolve a process in order to get to 'yes'. Specifically Professor Avis said:

...I'm very conscious of there having been situations where actually I've kept silent when I haven't agreed. I've kept silent because there hasn't been enough time to thoroughly discuss something. Something else coming along on the agenda, all the classic things that I'm sure people would say in this context, 'I can't be bothered' or I am in this situation quite angry rather than confront it.

Sometimes I confront it and I feel happy and better. Yeah, I agree with the notion in principle of having a good fight. I think it would be better for us. I've got far more out of the sessions where we've been frank and talked about differences, agreeing on differences, which is important.

In contrast Professor Rhodes was of the view that he thought the Policy Group exhibited too much patience: 'what we haven't got is impatience'. A strong theme that was echoed by all was that 'sharing' information and views' formed a strong thread of what 'T' was doing, but actually translating it into a collaborative planning

5 A particular issue addressed by the facilitator in one of the residential for the Policy Group as part of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project

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cycle or setting strategic targets was much more challenging and many mentioned this as a failure.

Referring to the practice of achieving consensus decision making through silence generally, Professor Pope noted:

...it's not a positive affirmation and that is a problem. When we had our annual overnight at Winchester, we began to talk about ways of getting round that...we discussed whether we should have supra powers in the group, someone who will help the Policy Group steer an improved path...the idea of a Chief Executive who would help us through all of this. Then you can get issues out, you can go for a presumption that consensus means that you've signed up, because if silence is an affirmation then you can say that it is so.

In his interview Professor Diggins reflected on the fact that there had been altercations within the Policy Group and that they were important:

I think... a good row has been important to us. They never really actually were good rows, but they were frank exchanges. But all the same they have been quite important and how they have informed and been sort of structured, particularly with the facilitator of the project, where he sat there and sought to find out everyone's ambitions without treading on everyone's toes... those are quite positive things.

There have been other situations where people have been frustrated between members of the Policy Group: where things have been said without being sufficiently careful and it has established resentment which could go on and on and that is very difficult. In a particular instant one CEO made a comment which was taken very badly and then in turn received a real criticism of academic relationships between them and their management team.

So there are two things in there: one is the positive row where it is good to air views, but then secondly there is the need to have extraordinary sensitivity in collaborative management if you are going to get a positive outcome.

Two CEOs (Professors Close and Searle) considered that there had been an extreme event that led to a consideration of leaving the partnership. Professor Searle conceded that whilst not wishing to leave 'T' on balance he was:

No, no... I mean irritated and a bit frustrated, but never, never, never that far, you know.

Of the five other CEOs, the same event had made them pause, reflect and review about their membership of 'T'. Interestingly, two were supporters of the particular circumstances, championing it as a positive way forward, and three were vehemently opposed to it. The particular event focused on the strategic review of 'T' by XYHE as external consultants and the potential vision for 'T' to centre future development
around an exploration of becoming a University of the Arts⁶. This suggested exemplar of activity had stemmed from one or two CEOs suggestions when being interviewed by XYHE. A project such as this, that was likely to be looked on favourably by the Funding Council and attract significant funding under their Strategic Development Fund would operate as a major shift in gear, escalating to a project that ostensibly and publicly committed ‘T’ to investigating a new formal organisational entity. It was, however, clearly a step too far for some members. This critical incident can be identified as one of the key moments of fracture within the collaborative as can be seen from the specific responses set out below.

Professor Diggins was unequivocal in his position about not wanting to be part of any such exploration. For him the concept of a University of the Arts was untenable and he categorically stated “...that I would have left had that gone ahead”.

For Professor Avis, purpose and timing were both factors affecting his response:

_They talked about us becoming a University of the Arts, which I thought was a step too far at the time. and also made me say something that I regretted after that time. But you know, I'd just started here and I didn't want to be a University of the Arts. You don't know what to do and which way to go..._

The depth of feeling about the ‘T’ Strategic Review and the investigation of the potential for a University of the Creative Arts was expressed as his being:

...raging mad with that one and I was pleased that there was a climb down because I really just felt that it was just a push too far. But again it was to do with the situation of, once again, feeling that you were being pushed into something, a feeling of being presented with something that you had to respond to and react to rather than starting from scratch as a group and saying 'where do we want to get to, how far do we want to go and who shall we use to help us get there’ rather than saying ‘these are the things we’re offering’. I know that those people [referring to the XYHE External Consultants] came and talked to each of us specifically, but perhaps they needed to understand more about what was needed. It was too superficial.

There are a couple of things that were interesting about this: it was not clear that there was, as Professor Avis saw it a climb down, and the actions that resulted can be seen as falling into the category of what Professor Searle has described as ‘collaborative arrest’ - there was no agreement to go forward because strong dissenting views had been expressed, but there was never an actual decision to decline what was on offer by the External Consultants. In the final event some two and a half months after production of the Review document and discussions where

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⁶ This was also referred to in the interviews by the first two CEOs who had not considered it as a membership threatening event for them personally

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views were aired quite bluntly, the Chair did write a diplomatic letter to External Stakeholders and External Consultants to the effect that the Policy Group were not able to take this forward at present.

Professor Pope talking in the interview about this same incident again spoke about ‘the episodic nature of collaborative management and that it does not flow continuously’. He was still of the opinion that this situation with the XYHE and External Consultants:

...is never over until it’s over, but now is the time I have to start thinking about alternative strategies for my institution. So just let’s say ‘OK now that’s part of history, but that it wasn’t easy to let go of. We’re not now being federalised and if we’re not going to federalise then I’m going to look at other commercial opportunities and so what you do is in a sense turn ‘T’ into something else. It’s not going to be a vehicle for this, but it will be a vehicle for some very, very useful work and we don’t quite know what that may or not be as yet.

The third dissenting view on the University of the Arts idea came from Professor Moore who believed that in ‘T’ there remained difficulties of effective decision making together with sustainability when a consensus view could not be achieved. He spoke of XYHE as:

...they seemed to be coming in and looking at ‘T’ entirely from the point of view of central resources and things like that and they didn’t seem to – I may be wrong – but they didn’t seem to have any interest in the core business of the institutions, which are the creative arts and design and performing arts institutions. It felt as though they were like management consultants coming in... saying well, you know you just want finance for this, instead of saying well look this might be a way of developing research around here or academic clusters around there. That would have been more interesting.

Professor Moore was least happy with the practice of collaborative management within ‘T’ when he felt that he was being driven by HEFCE or any agency closely associated with it. He expressed this in terms of the following:

‘T’ was like a sort of child of HEFCE and you felt as though whatever we said it was a bidding mechanism to get much more money out of HEFCE. But of course, you don’t get something for nothing out of HEFCE and I did feel that HEFCE or some people in HEFCE had a different idea about what they’d like to see ‘T’ do than we had had. I’d rather have it honest and up-front rather than get HEFCE moving ‘crab-like’ from the side.

3.2.3 COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT SKILLS: PEOPLE, PERSPECTIVES AND PERSONALITIES

(a) Engendering Trust

Trust is often cited as an underpinning pre-requisite of collaborative relationships. Collaborations frequently form and grow because of a pre-existing personal
relationship where trust has already been established, or if this is not the case the
putting in place of activity where trust can be built effectively. Professor Rhodes
pointed to the skill of engendering trust in a collaborative setting and the implications
and ramifications when trust was broken. He referred to the situation where in his
personal experience he felt trust had been breached for him within 'T'. This, he
summarised as those situations where individual CEO agendas were taking priority
over the work of the collective association and he pointed to a particular period in
June 2001. In his opinion:

"...what threw the spanner in the works was when the trust broke between us,
and I could have been drawn into one or two different groups. So the
moment that you found there were little factions growing and then another
variable was where it was found that one institution was talking to an
institution external to 'T'. At that moment when everything happened, that
broke the trust amongst the group and it never recovered."

Professor Close felt that 'trust' grew from the close opportunities to work together and
he referred also to the importance of having an intermediary within the
organisational framework to act as an 'honest broker' within 'T':

"...in terms of the key success factors in collaborative management, I think the
major ones are trust and also having someone like you [the T Co-ordinator] to
pull it together all the time. That is really critical to do that, to have
someone in a sense who has a relationship with all of them, but is in another
sense, not any one of them - you know the thought of an honest broker who
can work between us."

However, trust issues came into play in different ways. For example, Professor
Close cited the discussion on subscription fees, where because of both a lack of trust
in outcomes and the perceived inequity from some members, 'T' did not succeed in
putting in place a differentiating subscription fee mechanism based on student
numbers in an institution. So he thought:

"...we're back to consensus and to a state where everyone, regardless of size
pays the same."

He also noted that the commitment that flows from trust and the really 'in-depth'
pulling together that is necessary to sustain consortium activity was not really
evident. Talking about the general context of 'T' he thought:

"...it's a sort of collaboration between CEOs and with yourself and one or two
other people. The role of really pulling together - well I haven't really seen a
major move in any institution to effectively develop its collaborative
procedures."

Professor Avis, as a later member joining 'T' was very conscious of 'trust' issues,
both in its early history and at the end of the Developing Collaborative Management
Skills project::
...we still don't have trust and maybe I wonder if one would ever be able to have complete trust in a collaborative setting. I bet if you went to Cornwall and looked at the Cornwall Universities Consortium, whether there wouldn't be complete trust there either. I don't think it's just 'T.'

With regard to 'T's early days, Professor Avis acknowledged that the contribution of social networking – that is, sharing information and spending time together is important. Through getting to know each other better some of the formality is dropped. However, the interview again suggested the divide between the 'founding fathers' and the later membership. From a non-founder perspective he suggested:

...well that goes back to the perception of 'T' because there were four partners who knew each other, who got together and thought this would be a good idea. So they had that combination of knowing each other and some history and some baggage. Also they had the idea. I mean, OK there might have been a couple of people in it, but they had the idea, which is another factor dividing us, and when you combine those things, it makes it more difficult. It's about getting to know people, it's like joining a club.

Despite this however, a special trust, sympathy and understanding grew between Professor Avis and two other colleagues in particular with whom he had a previous working history. He was aware of all their shared beliefs and commitments and particularly in relation to research:

...we have been mates on the research agenda for some time, and we have a view of practice based research that is important and we share things like that. So you bond with them because it's based on history – it's what you bring to the table isn't it? Other people in 'T', I didn't know as well. So there was no automatic bond, so you're always starting off, maybe not on the wrong footing, but we're talking about difficult issues without knowing them well.

Professor Moore viewed 'trust' as an absolutely essential facet of collaborative management and felt that this would be principally engendered through collaborative learning. Comparing his membership of 'T' with his involvement in regional consortia, he felt that there was a more of a degree of trust in 'T'. He spoke about feeling 'safe' and that he did not feel 'threatened' in the same way as the 'predatory institutions' that existed in his regional consortium. With those larger institutions, and within the regional set-up he discussed the degree of institutional diversity and how it naturally attuned a CEO to being more politically guarded because of the higher political stakes.

However, within 'T', Professor Moore expressed a disappointment with the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project and felt that he had not gained anything personally:

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their main concerns [facilitators from CEO Residential Workshops] seemed to be getting people to like one another so that they can get to work together...it was a bit like a therapy group.

His preferred view was for an actual real 'live' project to be set up (and presumably although a HEFCE funded project, the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project did not match this expectation). Learning through such a 'live' project would not finish with the project itself, but would, he hoped, escalate the 'T' Policy Group to the next level and put down building blocks for the longer term:

You're not just thinking about, 'oh well lets just learn this for now'. It means it never ends, it continues...

Professor Pope’s response to a question on the significance of trust and mutuality to the process of collaborative management met with a quick retort:

...it doesn't matter whether there is real trust or mutuality in my view. Chief Executives are used to working in a world where there is no trust or mutuality – perhaps mutuality about what you do, but you have to work out beforehand what’s in it for each side. I think it's about using competition very effectively. I think that there is a certain sort of patina that operates around these kinds of collaborations which is sort of dishonest.

However, there were several illustrations during the interview with him where instances of breach of trust appeared to have made impact on his approach to collaborative management. He noted that a statement made carelessly in a collaborative context could have more resonance and a greater impact on trust than in an institutional context:

...you’ve heard colleagues say that ‘if I started from here I wouldn't have necessarily chosen this partnership’ and with such statements therein was the beginning of the rot. Those things were never made clear earlier – you know it’s sort of rather we are joined 'I am a member – I'll join this particular band wagon'.

Professor Pope was not convinced that 'T' was a collaboration of respected peers who shared more than what differentiated them. Although there was the promise of an advance for small specialist institutions:

...and I would like to hold onto some of those promises still, it has become very difficult. The reason it's become very difficult is that I'm not sure that it is a collaboration of mutual respect. I don't think it any longer exists and therefore, if that were to be the case, I would still like to think that the mutual respect and trust will allow us to travel further down the road of belonging to something. Where I think the fracture has occurred, and it is poignant, is the presumption of a ‘them and us’ in 'T' based on falsification of self view surrounding the RAE. [referring here to the discussion that took place in June 2001]

When there were moments in the consortium where members ran into difficulty or where events occurred with which they could not agree, each indicated that there
was someone that they could trust to voice their view, or someone they could turn to, even if they were not going to voice dissent openly in the collective. Professor Pope, like others in the Policy Group recalled that when they had ‘tricky moments’ he was able to share them with others in the consortium, naming principally, Professor Close, Professor Rhodes and Professor Mel Diggins. He found that there ‘were always natural allies within the group’. When pursuing the point as to whether a CEO might retreat more to talk with colleagues in the home institution in such a case, Professor Pope did not feel this was the case, referring to the role of the CEO in this situation as a:

lonely job and it would not be possible to rehearse those things with people in case they might turn and have a problem with it.

Professor Searle, in turn also spoke about there:

...always being a voice within the Policy Group that engendered sympathy...one ‘voice, somebody you are close to. I think because ‘T’ has always been working operationally much more strongly than strategically, that the losses have been compensated at the organisational and operational level.

Professor Diggins felt that there were strong bonds amongst members of the group. Discussion in the interview continued with how one gets over a situation within a collaborative context if you feel isolated or cannot for individual reasons go along with an otherwise consensus view. In response to a suggestion that: ‘you cut your losses or stick to you guns’, Professor Diggins was of the view that for him, both of these came into play when there was something that was so fundamental to the way one’s own institution existed. He believed, however, that there was always someone within the Policy Group who you could share your views with if a CEO felt unhappy and suggested:

I think that’s what most people feel, which is in a sense a test of the evidence of ‘T’ success

Professor Avis spoke about his particular allies and those with whom he shared his discontents:

I talk to Priory Institute and to Earlsdon because of the kind of strategic alliance involving the relationship to research. There would be times when, yes I would say ‘I’m not happy about this, what do you think? To be more honest, more likely than anything a colleague is ringing me up because he gets angry first about something, you know and I’m usually in the position of saying ‘well, now maybe there’s a middle way here, maybe it’s not so bad, maybe we can compromise on this one, you know’.

These observations were interesting in respect of the natural groupings that arose in the collaborative based on personal relationships. In one sense, these pieces of
information were not only insights into trust issues, but were also indicative of the
fractures that were occurring and the factions that developed as mutuality took on
different dimensions and with different groups of people within the consortium.
However, it is similarly interesting that the personal investment that individuals had
made in the consortium appeared to outweigh any desire to leave it and would
suggest that all had made a decision on balance that the advantages of being a 'T'
member would remain of value. In terms of the progress being made in respect of
honest and open communication within 'T', Professor Avis was conscious of:

...others talking to each other a bit more now that we have a new Chair. I'll
occasionally meet with him about something. You know, if I felt a bit
concerned about this or I wondered if you had thought about that. But going
back to the leaving issue, there was a time when to varying degrees people
said, well if you leave, I'll leave, I suppose...and I just came to the conclusion
that I didn't want to leave. I didn't think it was a wise thing to do. I wanted to
hang on in there, and I still feel like that...I feel it would be an awful thing to
do, even though it maybe now that there are more people in it, people won't
mind.

Professor Avis continued with an illustration from a closed CEO discussion (at which
I had not been present) about how they approached the problem when the Policy
Group felt that they were at an impasse:

...there was an evening discussion we had once...where things like that were
shared in terms of some members saying 'well you know, a small group of us
might do this or you know we're fine thank you very much, if you want to
leave kind of thing'. I still don't feel, I suppose I feel a strong sense of honour
and obligation. I don't mean an obligation, having a duty in a marriage sort
of way, well it probably is like a marriage and the longer you're in a thing, the
more you do feel kind of bonded to it, even when it's difficult.

Professor Moore noted the freedom he felt to be able to express his discontent to
certain others in the group and added this was always done behind closed doors. He
took care not to adversely talk about any 'T' dissension in public:

...I make sure that HEFCE doesn't know. I've usually rung up Professor Avis
or Professor Pope as Chair or emailed them. There is always someone you
can talk to. Yes, I think that certainly we have more in common - Counodon
Institute and ourselves - than I do with the others and we certainly share
feelings on matters.

b) On Leadership and Management

The concept of personality and the nature of leadership and management were
inevitably aspects that were commented on by most CEOs. There was a recognition
by them about how profound and vital the quality of leadership and the ability to
handle the mix of personalities can be to effectively manage a collaboration. A
degree of ambivalence came through when CEOs pointed out what they knew or felt
about the success factors for collaborative management. At the same time there was a sense of disappointment or under-achievement in terms of developing their practice or the 'how-to' of collaborative management.

The literature in Chapter 6 suggests that collaborative leadership and not authoritarian processes are particularly appropriate for 'wicked' issues emanating from rapid change, and when the blurring of boundaries between stakeholders as well as when there is decreased finance from government sources (page 73), occurs. In the context of 'T', observations about how this leadership developed are set out below. What comes through is the dichotomy of both wanting a strong leader who has the authority and power to tackle issues and speak on behalf of the collaborative, but also the need for equanimity and for all ‘T’ members to be able to have their voices heard equally and to have their sensitivities respected and so forward momentum could be sustained.

Professor Pope, as Chair reflected on his hopes and aspirations about the impact of ‘T’ as a mechanism for collectively dealing with common issues that the higher education sector (and especially for specialist institutions) presented. There was a CEO expectation within ‘T’ that ‘things will get done’ and with hindsight the tight CEO ownership of it (their creation of ‘T’ as something they were personally managing) had worked counter-productively. Because of this the Policy Group kept getting drawn into the operational and this in turn threw up matters of trust that sometimes became counter to the CEO responsibilities in terms of protecting their own institutions. He noted that where ‘T’ had not got it right in management terms was this presumption of Chief Executives at the front end, first forming the Policy Group with an in-built presumption that the consortium belongs to them:

We didn’t say, OK, now we’ve done this and it is over to you Senior Managers, because there was no strategy as such, but just ‘work’ we were undertaking. We weren’t able to say to ourselves, how might this look as an academic model. Instead we started with a hierarchy of us as Chief Executives.

Professor Pope was also of the view that in terms of leadership and management:

...essentially to manage well, you have to lead well. To have to lead well you need to articulate the direction of an organisation. In its recent years, in my own institution – to coin one of the ‘T’ CEO workshop phrases, you have to tell the story articulately and often. If we establish that as a precept from which most executives work, I can then translate that across to collaborative management. What we don’t do is get off one bike and get onto another. You can’t do that. What you do, is you say there is still a presumption –
inherent cultural, emotional presumption – that the one is the same as the other, and that to manage you need to articulate a philosophy about it.

He recalled during the interview the comments of one or two colleagues who had expressed disenchantment with 'T' and who he felt were being destructive. For him part of the management was getting the message across constantly that the long-term gain related to innovation in new territories and that for this to happen there was a pre-requisite of a shared vision about a long-term gain for collective winning. When careless statements were made this could have a damaging impact on the collaborative. This meant that for him, one of the key lessons for the future, would be to pick your partners very carefully and stick with them and not to be persuaded to add numbers during the period of maturation. The maturation period, he believed from the experience of 'T' would certainly be longer than eighteen months and is more likely to be three or four years at least.

Professor Searle also stated:

*I think we lacked the collaborative. The Chair should come at it completely detached from one institution's perspective. And I think that with the greatest respect to our first Chair who I thought had tremendous energy, I think that the third year was very difficult for that person for reasons of their own move and there was a loss of the sort of objectivity – this was a very serious setback in collaboration.*

Later on in the interview, he again returned to the role of particular personalities in a collective, which he believed had a special significance because with small specialist institutions it was often easier to engage in partnerships at senior level – because of the sense of isolation in terms of the big agendas, and because of the need to collectively 'punch above (individual institutional) weight'.

*The trouble with working at the most senior level in any organisation is that you're touching on particular personalities – such as our association, with leadership at the centre of it.*

Professor Close in reflecting on the missed opportunities thought that the change in constituency of the consortium and the expansion too quickly from the original group compromised the effectiveness of being able to manage:

*I think it wasn't strong enough, the movement of one partner into the consortium came too early in a way, because you know, having got up and running you always get, I think, a much stronger commitment from the original partners. They started it. People joining it later never really take on that zeal in that way.*

He also was adamant that for the consortium to be effective there had to be strong leadership and that:
you do need a mechanism that an agreed imagination continues irrespective of the people involved.

He continued:

...it absolutely does need a leader because without a leader, it really can’t go anywhere in any strong direction and the leadership issues within ‘T’, I think were started well. You got the sense of moving in one direction when we were small. What we lost when the Chair moved institutions was the stability and a leader leading from an institutional position of strength. We also got bigger and in a way because of those two things, we lost a lot more.

and on whether the Heads of Agreement was strong enough or how ‘T’ performed in terms of strategic leadership (again with the caveats that this was not a personal criticism of the Chair):

...the Heads of Agreement had been loosely drafted – it was designed pretty well as an open-ended document that everyone could agree upon. What we wanted was some operational plan behind us. I think that leadership didn’t secure that, and if everyone didn’t agree at meetings then we were in a way stuck. I think with a different leadership that we would have pushed it through, we would have got to a different position from where we are now

Professor Close’s view was that despite these observations he did not perceive a failure of collaborative management, and it was just the 'layering' of the difficulties of positioning as events unfolded that inhibited performance. Instead he preferred to view the successes:

The successes are still the fact that ‘T’ is still together. It has to reinvent itself at some point, and that has to be around the Heads of Agreement. It has to have a policy and a vision of achieving things. If it doesn’t then it won’t get into the next phase.

Questions are... is there something we can achieve? Who wants to achieve it? How are we going to achieve it and who’s going to lead? Then it’s regular meetings, it’s taking agendas forward, having people with responsibilities to develop matters and to do certain things. It’s about commitment and key people managing to work their life around it

One of the common themes to emerge from the interviews was whether a group of CEOs could manage the agendas without external facilitation and whether such an appointment would have achieved more for ‘T’ or helped when there was a need to ‘drive the agenda hard’ (Professor Close). In discussion on this Professor Diggins was of the view that:

The ‘Developing Collaborative Management Skills’ project acted as a bridge between the operational and the aspirational, but as for the strategic, the particular key issues haven’t been addressed.
Professor Avis talked openly about particular times in the collaborative when he felt his peers had been underhand or engaged in behaviour that he disapproved of and in a self-effacing way included himself in this analysis. Specifically, he recounted an instance where:

I felt pushed by the lead institution for the project, saying you know ‘give us money by tomorrow this is a really valuable thing’. Although we knew it was bound to have some longer term resource implication... one gets hurried into kind of forking out money and you resort to your institutional position as soon as resources come out and you entrench yourself and say ‘well what are we getting out of this, right’ and also because we were being told to do this.

You [interviewer in role as ‘T’ Co-ordinator and Project Manager] were coming at it in a reasonable way I think, because you were talking to me about it and although we couldn’t look at the video conferencing kit in the end, I still understood how you’ve been convinced by the merits of it and I was swayed by that. I thought well, fine, you have been persuaded by it, well great, but it does go back to what perhaps creates distrust because you are being told by one person there’s pressure from HEFCE and if we do it quickly there will be saving... we’ll get this money, so sign this now, sign this letter and whatever and it won’t cost you anything and then you’re saying ‘no, it’s bound to have some resource implication, but others are telling you, ‘no, no, it’s alright’.

You know you are being played down and have to cope with these things that have become problematic. I don’t want to be in the position of ‘I told you so’ but I am. I know I might have said it once, but then what happens is that you go into a sulk – you sign the piece of paper – so the whole thing starts off on a bad footing and yes that goes back to the way that the particular part of the project was managed.

Similarly, in respect of the potential for his views to be swayed by the policy context, Professor Avis reacted to strong steers, conceding that:

I hate being told what to do. I resent it very strongly. I actually feel at the moment and like a lot of Vice Chancellors and probably Principals too, it’s about this issue about autonomy. And it’s HEFCE becoming more of a planning body and setting conditions of the grant about what you do. I like the HEFCE Chief Executive, he’s a very impressive guy, but his vision, and it’s his ‘vision’ at the moment dominates everything and I don’t actually – quite fundamentally – entirely agree with him. It isn’t saying that I don’t agree with collaboration. I don’t agree with this notion that suggests if somebody who is strong and somebody were weaker then the weaker must collaborate in order to get strength. It’s also saying that the HE sector should be something that is available to students in its totality and institutions are no longer important, and that I think fundamentally threatens the standing and status of higher education institutions.

The particular sensitivities of being pushed into a corner were explored with Professor Avis and particularly from his perspective of ‘having undue force exerted on him’ – as he put it ‘being bullied’. This again was illustrated by referring to specific incidents that had occurred during collaborative management meetings:
bullying takes many forms. It's not necessarily literal behavioural evidence, you know physical, or even visual, not even just body language, although I do notice people's body language. It's bullying through strategies, such as saying 'by tomorrow if we don't do this we will miss this deadline'. There are times when you as an individual [referring to interviewer in capacity as 'T' Coordinator] have to do that and I don't feel bullied by that. I feel then more of a kind of an 'asking for help' from me. But, when someone does it in a way that places me in a position where I'm powerless, I cannot make a decision based on my judgement. I'm being told what decision I have to make.

Because I was interested to explore this aspect of inter-personal relations which seemed to be based on a pre-existing conception of an individual (whether liked or disliked) I probed to see whether 'bullying' in this collaborative context depended on how well you knew an individual. I wondered by getting to know the individual and personality better as a peer and equal, whether what might have been conceived as bullying behaviour could be recast in the light of more contact and mellow into an acceptable character trait. In this sense the behaviour might not seem to be as personal as once seemed. Although acknowledging that bullying can take many forms, I conceded that knowing the personality does not make the effect of the behaviour anymore acceptable. However, in respect of one CEO's relationship to another where the perception of bullying was that 'X is always in a hurry, always wants the agenda item, done and dusted', Professor Avis observed that:

There are some people in 'T' who I think have a bullying manner who I manage to get on with. Yet there are some people in 'T who have a bullying manner, who I don't actually get on with. Yes some of them who have a bullying manner, I get on with OK - chiefly they still manage to treat me with some respect. It's a difference between having a manager - and as you say when you know someone and you know you may have to look behind or through their thing and all of that - because you've always felt you're treated with respect. Whereas if someone doesn't treat you with respect in a range of ways, that's different.'

Personally and in respect of the learning about leadership in collaborative management, Professor Avis found it quite humbling and hard and suggested that this was a reminder about how used to getting your own way he had become as a CEO. It was noted that often in a collaborative setting things go the opposite way and he believed that:

I've learned about myself which is important and I've learned what not to do, and I don't mean just from how others have been, but when I think of myself. What I think is particularly significant and fascinating is that when you become a chief executive, although you seek and are eager to learn, there is this sense of 'I have achieved something, you know, I have done this and I have significant experience and expertise to be able to do this job'. When you go into 'T' it's like starting all over again.
Professor Moore spoke about the requirements of managing the agenda and interests of 'T', together with the task of balancing them. He felt that 'T' benefited from having a full-time Co-ordinator and that in order to successfully lead and manage in a collaborative:

You've got to be able to first of all see the other person's point of view. I mean, you do that managing your own institution. At the end of the day, the Chief Executive makes the decision together with the Academic Board and various other bodies and on that basis you have to advise the Board of Governors. But then you have the power and authority in your appointed position to do that. Whereas if you are managing a collaboration between a lot of other institutions, you haven't got that authority and you haven't got that sort of mechanism to operate within. Therefore, you've got to work on the basis of not just sort of advancing your own interest. Quite often when taking the lead in regional consortia, I've found I will reach a consensus between two institutions that don't quite agree on something (and in fact, I might not agree with either) but because they're both in the project, I have to steer the middle ground, not necessarily just advance my view, but try and find something that actually works for those people who are actually doing the job and not something that just convinces me or works for me.

Professor Rhodes' thought that whilst 'T' had the potential to be powerful and influential, it had not made sufficient inroads into that potential. He noted the following within his own institution and that within 'T':

...people like to feel that we are out front, you know, they're innovating, they're leading, they're absolutely at the cutting edge of their particular art form

and that regarding 'T' there was:

...a huge strength that we haven't been able to take forward, because we haven't been able to marshal a concerted view – that is the one thing that we ought to be in a position to lead on in the creative industries. It's all great stuff that people talk about in the creative industries, but actually we are doing it right across the sweep of the territories. We are key collective players and that is not being heard.

On reflection, Professor Pope was not sure whether the inclusion of one particular institution in 'T' had been a good idea, but again the strategic imperative was in response to a HEFCE agenda:

HEFCE is still in a hurry which remains a problem. They are desperate to find good models, but in forcing our hand on this, we've been persuaded, rather over-persuaded about bringing new members in. It's pushed us backwards. That's not a negative comment about a particular CEO, it's simply that trying to bring somebody else up to speed in present national circumstances isn't easy. I would have done that and it would have been much easier to bring the new CEO of Coundon up to speed and embedded in 'T'. The sort of partiality that has been shown by one institution throughout was because he wasn't quite sure what he was getting in to and because he wasn't part of the founding development and he couldn't see the real opportunities for his institution.
With regard to the time commitment that CEOs gave to collaborative management, Professor Pope believed that rather than being critical of them only spending up to a day a week on the collaborative side of their institutional agenda, with collaborative management often being viewed as something 'additional' taking them away from sole institutional demands, it should be the reverse. CEOs should expect to spend at least a day a week on the agendas for the collaboration because 'T's work was on behalf of partner institutions:

...if you don't buy into that and if it is notional only, then it can become an additional burden. This is the distinction between a network and a collaboration through a consortium, and as a formal collaboration it should be an endemic part of the institution.

The job of melding the imagination of seven CEOs, to formulate strategy and to reflection whether through talking about and managing the collaboration there could result a shared strategic intent for 'T' was a significant challenge for anyone and Professor Pope gave his opinion from the perspective of the inaugural Chair. He thought that CEO imaginations in the collaborative setting are not remote from the current realities of any individual CEO:

...again it's back to the helter skelter, public sector role in which we live. You can’t control our markets at all. Our markets are being controlled by government and so in a period when we should have been maturing and being cautious and being careful, we've got a White Paper and a very insistent Funding Council looking for a model with which to barter. The reason that we have fallen from grace is not because 'T' can’t manage – because that is how it is translated – it's because the HEFCE CEO has not yet got something to show. He wants a model to say, 'look how it works'. So we weren’t able to federate our different imagination, which is what a federation is. The whole business of federation is what we could have put together without interference with our various imaginations

c) On Power, Independance and Autonomy

Although these three issues have threaded their way in to the interview data that has been presented, here they are extracted and examined as an integral and holistic part of collaborative management, explicitly commented upon in interviews. It is worth reminding ourselves of the heightened sensitivity to these three aspects in the particular collaborative setting of 'T' and to address the CEO experience of dealing with these issues.

The shift in skills from autonomous management to collaborative management remains a complex task in the minds of many of the CEOs. As Professor Searle noted in describing the 'schizophrenic' approach of the CEO engaged in decision making in the collaborative, a range of thought processes may come into play.
These could be anywhere along a continuum from thinking autonomously about preserving independence and the best interests of an individual institution, to thinking collaboratively with the best interests of 'T' at heart - "a negative outcome of what you would have got operating on your own" (Searle). It might also be a mixture of the above, driven by what was best for 'T' but influenced by self-interest and what could be achieved for the individual institution. While he was of the view that autonomy took precedence and that there had not been a true shift to collaborative management, Professor Searle again pointed to the CEO task of thinking institutionally first and foremost. Although conceding that the Policy Group worked collaboratively and that they had got better at it as time elapsed, he noted:

...there is a 'collaborativeness' which comes about from a greater practice and less positioning, but then it sometimes brings into the discussion pretty major pieces of information that are life threatening. So if you take the circumstance with Bryanstone or even Priory, or the new relationships that Sunnybank are exchanging, although it's a frank exchange, but then one gets to think what does this mean for 'T' and for me.

One perspective he suggested was that instead of collaboration empowering individual CEOs it actually empowered passivity. Professor Searle pointed in this regard to the distinction between 'T' and the University of Wisconsin system where he recalled from the interview with the Vice-President of the UW-System that 'the power of edict gave momentum'. The Wisconsin system was not voluntary but was forced through a representational system of state government and so in that case there was no other way to go.

Professor Close saw power, autonomy and independence as features that surface in any collaborative activity, and particularly manifested itself through:

'inequality of commitment, views and attitudes. That's a diversity issue that has never been resolved in a way -- we never found the glue

Professor Diggins was clear and passionate about the need to preserve institutional independence and acknowledged the enormous influence it had on the autonomy of institutions. This in turn had a role on power structures operating through both the Chair and sub-sets within 'T', although he said he was not conscious of power relations within 'T' as a feature of it. Conversely, in terms of responsibilities, he said he would feel confident and comfortable to speak out on behalf of 'T' and to put a 'T' view as and when required. His notion of power within the consortium surrounded the power of the Chair as a powerful position within the organisation and who can influence and speak for the organisation:
...the Chair will empower that person because they carry out authority for all of us. As to power struggles within ‘T’ I’m not conscious of somebody climbing to the top of it.

Professor Avis had some quite distinct views on the nature of power, autonomy and independence and his interview and in his view believed that in collaborative management “...people are the most important, power and politics will relate to people.”

As interviewer I honed in on an early comment made by Professor Avis about the shifting perspective that the CEOs might have to make in order for there to be successful collaborative management. A brief exchange followed because Professor Avis noted that I was using my proximate knowledge about the inner workings of ‘T’. He had assumed that discussion at interview would be purely objective as if I had no such knowledge. He had no objection to this, but had been answering purely as if he had been talking to someone who just trying to discover more about ‘T’. Having identified, clarified and reconciled our respective roles and positions, the interview continued and perhaps we had a more ‘backstage’ conversation in relation to the ‘power’ issues that collaborative management evoked, than a public ‘front stage’ discussion that might have been conveyed to an empirical researcher with a less well established relationship to the research area. Continuing on the theme about shifting perspectives that can be observed in collaborative management, he commented:

...it’s to do with power. That’s what’s different – power and politics and being able to get one’s own way. For me that is probably the single most significant factor because behind the notion of power there is so much again in terms of how people behave, but also in terms of what people want and how people operate, both inside and outside of ‘T’. It’s not just how we get on with each other. It’s how each of us interface and operate, not for their own institution, but with the external environment and each of us brings that to the table. And sometimes we share that and then we find that we don’t agree with each other’s perspective and postures and positions. That’s the difference, coming back to your question – when you are Chief Executive of your own institution you lead and although there are times when you encourage people in your own institution to make contributions which might be different from yours, you try and achieve your sense of direction and find a way forward – you agree your strategic intent. In the context of ‘T’ it’s back to the thing about dealing with others. You have to contribute in a different way. I keep coming back to power. I’m struggling with something here that’s slightly different from the things I’ve said before and it is something to do with wanting to face with the external environment and one’s understanding of it, perceptions of it and one’s capacity to influence it.

The notion of harnessing the power of different points of view was something that Professor Avis felt was particularly pertinent, and this more so than the power of
competition. The idea of being able to share perspectives and to harvest a collective view (although the tendency more often than not surfaced for collective view to be used to support individual institutional gain as well as 'T' agendas) was a distinct facet and win for the collaboration.

Professor Rhodes' insightful view of 'T' institutions joining together in the spirit of preserving their independence has already been referred to earlier: i.e. they were "...not joined together to be together but joined together to remain detached."

The common recognition by the Policy Group of feeling part of a kindred spirit and among friends, together with the advantage that 'T' provided an umbrella organisation, acting as a protection against larger predatory universities, was a sentiment that was shared by most. Professor Rhodes spoke about the capacity to both lose the plot and an institutional identity and that these were very real drivers for maintaining the focus of independence. Sunnybank Institute's plans had included being proactive in looking at various linkages with other institutions, such as Priory and Bryanstone and was something that they would have done in any event. It was simply facilitated more easily and productively through its membership of 'T'. The membership of 'T' was a very different mix from the one that Sunnybank had envisaged for its primary network and in turn, Professor Rhodes talked about his Institute's plans to increase their mix and to work with other potential partners:

...the next thing down the line will be a partnership with one of the drama musical theatre schools which is currently now in the higher education system, and I think it will be a three year stretch getting that in place. So when 'T' starts looking at Sunnybank building up these linkages and constantly changing as an institution, it is going to say eventually 'hang on a moment, you know, what does this mean. How many colleges are going to get into the 'T' act under this umbrella? Even though all the student numbers together are considerably less than say Coundon and Earlsdon.

The views of Professor Pope on matters relating to power and autonomy have also been illustrated through earlier discussion in this chapter on leadership and management. This occurred in his discussions about the centrality and presumptions of power that should cede to the Chair in order for collaborative management through an entity like 'T' to operate. Necessarily, this touched on the autonomy of individual institutions working in a parallel collaborative setting and whether 'something would be given up in order to gain something more'. Whereas he was of the view that the territorial gain would be for everyone, he could see that in practice this had not happened. In practice autonomy and independence take pride of place in specialist
institutions’ individual strategic priorities, and although power would not overtly be written in:

...there is always a presumption of power and that goes with why we do what we do. We like power. However, for 'T' power isn't the issue because I don't think at any point have we gone to a majority vote on something.

When discussing the reasons why a number of people did not want an external Chair for 'T', Professor Pope thought that the overriding reasons were to do with a challenge to autonomy and a loss of power.

I think it became very clear to me at that time that there were certain people sitting at the table who were there for the ride, and very little of it for gain. You know the idea ...'what's in it for my institution? What can I give?' There were very few people round that table sharing the same vision and dream.

4.0 SUCCESSES & WEAKNESSES OF 'T' COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

Towards the end of most interviews with each CEO, discussion about the successes and weaknesses of 'T' collaborative management took place. The prompts in the interviews given by me (see Appendix 4, Aide Memoire for Interviews with CEOs in the Policy Group) were about how in the final analysis 'T' might be able to tell a story about its original formation and its future ambitions. The facilitator of the CEO Workshops in the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project had identified that while the first (formation story-telling) was often done clearly and well and in both private and public settings, the latter (the story of future ambitions) posed the collaborative significant problems.

Professor Diggins referred to the successes in achieving strong personal relationships, of getting to know each other and identifying the need to secure common goals and beliefs together with the systems through which to deliver projects and activity, despite the fact that they had not always performed the latter effectively. He acknowledged that there was a reluctance to tell the story about what 'T' would be and thought that '...we do need to be able to tell that story'. He put the omission to tell the story down to a reticence to face what the outcome might be:

If we are looking for the issues about where 'T' might be and where it ought to be, then we have to establish that pretty soon.

In reviewing how far 'T' had actually moved and what it had achieved since its first Strategic Away-day in May 2000, it would appear from looking at the list of bullet points listed in 2000, that 'T' had not moved that far. Professor Diggins noted that 'T' was still struggling with securing a strategic aim and a strategic plan for the future,
and this process had been the subject of the discussion in May 2000 (Appendix 5) and was still ongoing. He referred to the role of HEFCE in this ambition and talked of the messages coming down the line from the HEFCE Regional Consultants – that they were disappointed that 'T' had not bitten the bullet in the way HEFCE might have hoped by providing a working and effective model, and especially in regard to the developing a more collaborative human resources model that they thought they might be possible through collective working on the HEFCE Rewarding & Developing Staff initiative.

Professor Searle in reviewing the list of bullet points considered at the Policy Group Strategic Away day in May 2000 agreed that 'T' had become more of a club than a network, and he thought 'T' had not realised the true potential to be a powerful and big voice adding significant value to institutions. Perhaps, more importantly, he indicated it had not secured agreement on the issues of academic collaboration.

Professor Close thought that the Policy Group had worked very hard at trying to understand each other, had been successful as 'an attracter of funds' (although not everyone necessarily wanted to work with the same funding streams at the same time) and he was philosophical about the fact that 'T' was not yet read to tell a story about its future:

*I think we've made a start. I think we've got a good track record, but we can only live on a track record for so long. I mean you have to be bringing others on line and I think that's our problem that we haven't been moving it forward fast enough and deciding what 'T' will be. We won't get far without a shared future vision or strategic plan because we'll go around in circles.*

This again points to the need for a low base denominator of a strategic intent, although individual stakeholders may hold variants of it in their minds. At the same time Professor Close acknowledged the external environmental pressures that all CEOs within 'T' experienced and how exponentially institutions had been growing or changing since 'T' was first formed. He concluded with the view that:

*...collaboration is going to be on the agenda for a long time to come and I would hate us to feel that there's something here that we didn't do justice to. It has to be nurtured, it has to be managed and it needs some strength in there to push that forward, that's it.*

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7 This was an expectation clearly held by HEFCE and conveyed informally to the Policy Group because they were aware that there was a 'T' HR Managers Group that met regularly, even though the prospectus was clearly drafted for an institutional framework. How and why the expectation escalated to 'T' approaching this collaboratively, when again 'T's approach was to share information and expertise was never clearly resolved.
Professor Avis similarly pointed to the external environment and current policy context as a factor impinging upon the ability of the Policy Group to be able to formulate and tell a story about the future of 'T'. He expressed the key success factors for anyone contemplating embarking on a venture requiring collaborative management as:

...tenacity, patience and finding a way of jointly being, with a keen knowledge of the external environment. So that's it - a mixture of things we've done and things we haven't done and what we've not done sufficiently and those things that I think we can still do. I'd like to share intelligence in a more collegial way and sharing intelligence towards where we can grow and go.

In reflecting on the list of bullet point from the Strategic Away Day about how far 'T' had moved forward Professor Avis acknowledged many of 'T's achievements. It had become a forum for sharing information among the partner specialist institutions and a vehicle for proposing and presenting bids. It operated as a support network, but not in his opinion as an exemplar of inter-institutional activity. In terms of defining the nature of the association, he vacillated between it being a club and a family, but certainly did not see it as a select club:

Because that sounds an exclusivity thing, which is obviously taking on more people and I don't think we are entirely exclusive. I think family is quite a good term, because we fall out. I think we are to a degree influential and I do think we're protective. Are we powerful? – yeah I think we have a reasonably big voice and I think we are listened to. We are not a national representative voice for specialist institutions, but yes, we are formally constituted and we do have an effective track record of achievement. In terms of academic harmonisation, we haven't done that yet. I don't think we are an exemplar in terms of institutional co-operation, but we are an exemplar of reality. In terms of whether we are or were looking to be a federal model, well that's contentious.

Professor Moore believed that the Policy Group had worked hardest at reconciling different member's points of view and the overriding key success factor if he were to be advising others contemplating collaborative management relationships would be the need to derive a sense of common purpose.

He felt that it would be possible to tell a strong story about the future of 'T' although his reflections on the bullet points from the Strategic Away Day were still focused on: 

...what could it be? I just don't think it [T] can be a national representative voice for specialist institutions because it doesn't have that membership. So it can't have a national voice really... it's difficult to find a market niche for what you are doing. You can't try and do everything. What 'T' needs to do, what it can do in terms of its national profile is problematic, because it set itself up in the first place as a regional organisation and maybe that is what it needs to do. In my view it should interface much more directly with the RDAs. That's where it sits and that's where I feel it needs to go.
Professor Rhodes found that the successes of 'T' could additionally be grounded in the relationships that happened, particularly between Sunnybank and Priory Institute: “they only happened because we met within the family of ‘T’.” Because they were ‘T’ related ideas they enjoyed success, although it was acknowledged that trying to do things academically and artistically as ‘T’ partners could prove challenging for reasons of different timetables, different funding positions and different curriculum agendas. This became exponentially more difficult when trying to bring together three or four partners, and apart from ‘T’ itself the bilateral relationships between individual members had been most productive. Professor Rhodes referred to the Sunnybank’s longstanding interesting in the development of work in digital production and sound design that had resulted in a Foundation Degree with Bryanstone Institute. Bryanstone did not have the musical or theatrical side but they were sound designers and a good partnership was forged there.

However, generally on the creative side, Professor Rhodes felt that ‘T’ had not fulfilled its potential, despite the connections that had been triggered and that would not have existed. He referred to one ongoing film connection his institution had outside of ‘T’ that occurred because an approach was made by the other party wanting to use musicians ‘on the cheap’ and a partnership had grown from that. Within ‘T’ however, there were institutions who would not collaborate with each other because they had reservations about the parity of credentials and disappointment was expressed about the failure to strike up more robust internal partnerships. This was particularly so in the case of Sunnybank with Holyhead Institute:

I wouldn’t want ‘T’ to simply become a ‘management issues’ function and some of us who are, who still try to be creative people, even though we are swamped by responsibilities, like Mel Diggins for example, yearn for more of that kind of thing.

Building an awareness of the wider picture within institutions was a critical function for Professor Rhodes, “it is something which has opened our eyes and ears to different worlds”

The ‘win-win’ also had its place as a success factor and Professor Rhodes expressed his impatience about progressing matters in terms of the pace at which ‘T’ was moving.

I think the patience is there because there’s always so many other things within the institution to do. The thing about ‘T’ is, that is shakes and makes you look at things you wouldn’t normally be looking at – about doing things together and it’s uncomfortable. It can be awkward and people in my place say ‘why the hell are you doing this with these people when you can be doing
it with those people' but in turn you're saying 'well we wouldn't be doing it with anybody if we weren't brought up to the idea by this 'T' relationship'. I think that's very true. People just wouldn't start, because everything else, you know, the roof, the plumbing, the latest HEFCE papers – all the other things catch up with you and you've got to cope with it all and then suddenly, the Policy Group says 'but think of it in this way' and that's good.

With regard to the specifics of 'T' not being in a position to tell the story of the way forward, Professor Rhodes' view was that this was because:

The way forward is changing all the time and that's changing because there are different pictures, smaller colleges, individual needs. I think Earlsdon and Coundon have got stability and a mass which means they're not going to be pushed around much. They might suddenly decide to make a bold move and amalgamate with a university, but financially, they are not causing HEFCE any problems. The little ones are and therefore their story is still very unresolved and I suppose we are moving to a point where I would say in five to ten years – the next five to ten years – all of that will be tied together and it is going to be tied either with 'T' involvement or tied up because each of those little colleges is going to find a different form of security.

In answer to the question of whether the processes of collaborative management could work without having a shared strategic vision, Professor Rhodes was unequivocal, "yes it can, yes it has, I don't think one should be demure about that at all". This was despite the fact that 'T' had not made substantial inroads into academic harmonisation and that the issue of being 'powerful and influential' was something that had not been fully tapped into:

I think that we've got a huge strength which we haven't been able to take forward because we haven't been able to marshal a concerted view - that it is the one thing that we ought to be in a position to lead on, is the creative industries. It's all great stuff that people talk about in the creative industries, but actually we are doing it right across the sweep of the territories. We are key collective players and that is not being hard.

Professor Pope viewed the key success factor in managing collaboration as that of 'focus'. His response to the CEO Workshop project facilitator's observation that the Policy Group is not yet ready to tell a strong story about the future of 'T' although it can tell a story in the context that led to the creation of 'T' was that what had been achieved to date was not on balance a failure of collaborative management:

... I would have said no it's not a failure on 'T's part. I would have said that actually strategies emerge and you start off with a very simple explanation and then you kind of get more and more complex as the drive comes forward, but that remains an internal issue.

He noted that the people who most want to see a shared strategic intent are external critics who in his opinion want to do damage to some of the ideals that the CEOs have:
...it is our external funders who want to see a model and therefore want in a sense to pin us to a strategy, and those who are the more junior officers of the piece. In our case the Development and Operations Group, you know, do like absolute clarity in why they're doing the work, and especially as they are not part of that 'imagining set-up' by the chief executives.

Finally, reviewing the bullet points that the 'T' Policy Group came up with at their first Strategic Away Day in May 2000, Professor Pope gave some of his own thoughts on re-reading them now.

*It puts in place a whole range of presumptions that deny what 'T' could be. I mean, they are absolutely fascinating, but you look at them and say 'that's what it is, how can it become that? yes that's what is needs, but that goes without saying.*

Professor Pope’s views on how clear the goals of the Policy Group appeared to be were that they are as confused now, as they were in May 2000. He was also of the opinion that if the same ‘post-it’ exercise were repeated now, a very similar set of bullet points with the same soft phrases and aspirations would be generated.

*I think that it is sad actually, but because it’s sad, it doesn’t necessarily mean that it’s a disaster. I think it again says, ‘what is it that wakes people up?’ What wakes people up is money again, or at least a sensation, a potential of improved profile, so if we take something like the fact that it was very interesting when I said at the last ‘T’ Policy Group, that we could not be talking about a University of the Arts and everybody knows that’s true. There was a point when one member said ‘I know I can quite understand, or something like that and of course, it would have been for them the biggest opportunity.*

However, Professor Pope acknowledged that “*there are never, ‘not opportunities’*”, and being optimistic he felt that there were still opportunities for restructuring and reconfiguring ‘T’. He asserted that funding was still available under the HEFCE Strategy Development Fund, although time was moving on and his very final comments related to the fact that:

*At least within ‘T’ there maybe one or two partnerships who could develop as a form of collaboration.*
CHAPTER 11 - INTERPRETATION: REVIEW OF THEMES CATEGORIES AND
FIT WITH RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to interpret and review some of the themes that have emerged from this research on understanding collaborative management. Together the literatures gathered together to underpin collaborative management, the findings from the account in Chapter 8 and the Policy Group field interviews in Chapter 10, produce a rich and fertile territory of data on which to reflect about the process and practices of a new consortium. These help to explain both the concept of collaborative management and to shed light on the complexities facing academic consortia within higher education at the turn of the 21st century, and for specialist higher education in particular. This research was such that it produced considerable quantities of data. The challenge has been to transform and interpret the qualitative data in a rigorous and scholarly way in order to capture the complexity of the social world in which collaborative management has emerged and within the paradigm of the policy, people and process context in higher education.

Thus, in posing the question, ‘how do we understand collaborative management?’ the three related research questions have acted to contextualise both the growth of and the questions facing academic consortia. These subsidiary research questions explored the external factors influencing the growth of academic consortia in the higher education sector; why and how the CADISE collaborative management concept developed, and the factors that attracted the CEOs to the idea of CADISE in the first place. Finally, and perhaps most importantly for a skills implementation model that is suggested later in this chapter, there is a question about what are the practices and competencies that have emerged to support collaborative management from the collective learning by the Policy Group in the ‘Developing Collaborative Management Skills’ project. The CADISE Policy Groups' experiences and stories over a finite period of time in implementing collaborative management offer an in-depth and a new contribution to knowledge on the possibilities and parameters of a higher education partnership.

Because of the immersion of the researcher into this field as a practitioner researcher, the research design and methodological considerations — how data is generated and made sense of — are fundamental to an understanding of this research
and represents 'work based learning' as well as empirical research. It was observed that everything that was being researched was complex, multi-faceted and multi-layered because of the reconfiguration needed for the transference of professional practice into the collaborative setting. At the end of this study, it is important to make the connection and to assess the 'fit' between the findings and de Rond's (2002, 2003) notion of 'the legitimacy of messiness' that was introduced in Chapter 1. This was adopted as an underpinning, construct of how alliance formulation and strategy formation and management could be understood and called for heterogeneity. Through further deconstructing collaborative management according to the policy context, people context and processes involved (which in itself does not lend itself to neat boundaries) and looking at the data from a chronological, relational and practice perspective, it is hoped that a more in depth understanding of the drivers and nature of collaboration can be achieved.

Much of the research has operated at more than one level. At level one this research was about a project on *Developing Collaborative Management Skills* for Senior Executives in a consortium that had attracted external funding. At level two, it was a more complicated area of research because CADISE was undertaking a research project to both learn about and generate 'new knowledge' in an innovative area, at the same time as the Policy Group were committed to collaborative management through forming the consortium in the first place. The CEOs as the Policy Group were contemporaneously practising their day to day 'art' of collaborative management as an emergent phenomenon and something they needed to understand, at the same time as learning about it in a formal way and recorded way. At a third level, as argued by the Chair of CADISE when the HEFCE fund for Good Management Practice was first announced, if CADISE did not shape and win success in this initiative, there would be no point in CADISE. The *Developing Collaborative Management Skills* project was thus pivotal to CADISE, not just in terms of whether it would be an excellent model of consortium management, but whether a common cause could translate into a commonality of views and result in an excellent model of specialist college consortium higher education enhancement.

At a fourth level, the research on the project and the contemporary collaborative management practice of CADISE related to a consortium of cognate small specialist institutions formed ostensibly to meet the challenges of the 21st century head on. The project set out the opportunity for CADISE to collectively 'punch above its weight', to be well placed for the emerging regional agendas and to capitalise on the
government and Funding Council agendas for collaboration. CADISE was formed in the era post the Dearing National Inquiry into Higher Education (1997) and presaged the White Paper of January 2003 and the subsequent Higher Education Act 2004, a moment in time that is illustrative of the ambiguity and uncertainty facing the sector, and small specialist institutions in particular. Both of these key documents set a policy steer that reflected the changes and challenges that were fast becoming reality and emanated from a global market in higher education. The incoming Chief Executive of HEFCE (Newby 2002) summarised the findings of the Dearing Report as setting the steer on lifelong learning, the creation of a learning society, regional economic development, pure research and scholarship, technological innovation, social cohesion and public accountability. However, the flip side of the coin posed challenges for specialist institutions in dealing with their own degree of paranoia about survival and as one CEO cited in interview in the study "we can't conceal the neurosis. The detachment of being Chief Executives in a specialist institution is like being part of an endangered species".

2.0 REVIEWING POLICY, PEOPLE AND PURPOSE

In addressing the primary research question of how do we understand the phenomenon of collaborative management in higher education at the beginning of the 21st century, a tri-partite approach has been adopted of looking at the people, the process and the policy context. More specifically, within the case study of CADISE tracking both the experiential learning in the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project at the same time as the practice of collaborative management in developing strategy, it was possible to study the part that people, process and policy context played. A '3 P' model is by no means unique in management literature (see for example, Mintzberg (1998), Bartlett and Ghoshal (1994. 1995) Van Maurik on Purpose, Organisational Policy and Processes, (2001), Johnson and Scholes (1997, 2002)).

The complexity of the 'limbs' of the project (and the research) according to the dimensions of people, process and the policy context that form the essence of this study were first mapped by me in 2000 and is included as Figure 19 on the next page. While this template was produced as a starting point and was somewhat

1 Newby, H (2002) Developing a strategic view of higher education over the next 10 years Keynote address by Sir Howard Newby, Chief Executive of the Higher Education Funding Council for England, to the HEFCE annual conference at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, on 18 April 2002.
crude, its priority was in terms of project management of The Developing Collaborative Management Skills project and only later became useful in terms of practitioner research. I viewed it when it was drafted in early 2000 as a concept map on the possibilities and parameters of a higher education sector partnership. Its aim was to scope some of the inter-dependencies of the policy dimension, process and practice factors and variables and to help shape my understanding of the context that I was working in as well as to identify academic reading informing my practice and those elements that I needed to explore in order to better understand what was going on. This was both to achieve the purpose of the project and was a nascent area of interest that was to develop into practitioner research.

In this chapter, I review the themes and categories that have emerged from the data and will show the points of confirmation and departure from this original starting place. I aim to look through the research and "go beyond" the data to develop ideas and an implementation model for those who might be contemplating future collaborative management or those already engaged in relational activity in the collaborative context.

2.1 CHRONOLOGY OF CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS

It can be seen in the Figure 19 overleaf, that at the beginning of the study there were some guiding conceptual and theoretical constructs that I had identified at the outset of CADISE and the 'Developing Collaborative Management Skills Project' and that I anticipated would be instrumental in aiding an understanding in this area. My early thoughts about CADISE and the project were prior to using this area as doctoral research and were reflections on observations about how the Policy Group were setting about their individual and collective 'strategic intents' for CADISE and how these might be translated into project outcomes and deliverables.

The first seven months of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project was spent with me observing and taking notes on the project purely from the perspective of a Project Co-ordinator. The Developing Collaborative Management Skills facilitator who ran the CEO residential workshops identified the Policy Group's principal task as managing the three dimensions of the context, the content and the process of collaboration. This immediately resonated with the three 'P' models of process, purpose and people referred to above, that I knew about from previous research that I had undertaken and my business studies background. From my
Historical reasons for collaboration:
- Number of partners
- Motivation, voluntary, self-identified
- Non-exclusive relationship
- CEOs (top down, bottom up)
- Individual/personal histories
- Communications
- Interpersonal relationships
- Aspirations/fears

Generic factors
- Partnership in HE
- Growth of consortia in UK
- Reasons for collaboration to compete

Sector specific factors
- Globalisation
- Technology
- Communications
- Strategic alliances
- Values/ethics
- Diversity/change
- Academic quality
- Value for money
- Increased participation
- HE business/community interaction
- Sectoral honesty of education society purpose

CADISE specific factors
- Critical mass/leverage
- Diversity/complementarily
- Small specialist institutions/survival

THE POSSIBILITIES AND PARAMETERS OF A HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR PARTNERSHIP:
THOUGHTS ON THE DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT SKILLS PROJECT

- CEOs
- Small institutions
- Education
- Specialist
- Academic correlation
- Research
- Value for money
- 'Value added'

- The Practitioner Researcher (Jarvis 1999)
- Role of the CADISE Co-ordinator/Administrative Director
- Developing theory from practice (public face, front stage/private, back stage: FG Bailey)

- Definition - what is management?
- What is different about collaborative management?
- Involves groups of individuals or organisations

What makes it work?:
- Deriving a template for collaborative management (THE 'P' MODEL) (Bartlett & Ghoshal)
- Why (understanding), how (knowing), how to (doing), challenge to autonomy - collective learning/doing
- Conditions (trust/mutuality) - win/win, critical incidents, level playing field
reading and discussions about the aspirations of the Policy Group, I came to see the project in terms of it serving a number of needs for individuals (as well as the wider HE sector) and one that could give rise to a number of behaviours. There was thus a 'front-stage', 'back-stage' and 'under-stage' development going on that I had read about in the work of Goffman (1959), and something that later in the research I would return to in thinking about what Martin Trow (1974) termed the 'public' and 'private' lives of universities.

At this point in contemplation of shifting my PhD study to CADISE, I reflected upon and engaged with more reading about the concept of 'strategic intent'. This appeared to be pivotal both to the work of CADISE and the more publicly focused Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. It now became more important to develop a robust research approach with clear research questions and themes, to identify relevant literatures and to engage with supporting conceptual and theoretical constructs.

I quickly dismissed the idea of a hypothesis against which to test my data and especially because I saw from week to week a richness and complexity unfolding in both the issues to be addressed and the necessary processes to be able to address them. The Policy Group were tackling emerging national agendas in order to keep up and move forward, in some cases fighting a rear guard action to preserve their own specialist institutions and at the same time trying to put in place an infrastructure for a new and emerging model of a collaborative. The external consultant and project facilitator noted, when there is change in the HE sector, "the winds of change are felt first and most acutely by the small HEIs and they are thus a barometer of change". I believed that a single hypothesis setting out something to be tested would not allow me to capture the fertile nature of the territories under investigation and the multi-faceted and multi-dimensional nature of what was going on. Knowing that I was collecting data and that I would be looking back at it as a finite study, I therefore eschewed the more positivistic approach to my research in favour of capturing the data and its 'messiness' and engaging with an inductive process.

The primary research question in this research emerged as 'how do we understand collaborative management?' and has focused through the CADISE case study on the possibilities and parameters of partnership. This entailed researching the concept and process of 'collaborative management' contextualised in CADISE and tackling 'head-on' many of the higher education agendas at the beginning of the 21st century.
Together with the three sub-research questions (drivers and factors accounting for consortium formation and activity; those that account for CADISE as a consortium of specialist institutions; and the practices and processes that emerge as a form of collaborative management) three further lines for handling the research data and to answer the research questions influenced my thinking.

These included a temporal strand that developed a chronology about the emergence and growth of CADISE, tracking through the account of the earliest generic discussions about what the *Developing Collaborative Management Skills* project could be through to the focused discussion on the possibility of a University of the Arts and the key milestones in the Consortium’s development over a three year period. Secondly, a relational strand that provided a snapshot in time of the two sets of dynamic relationships: the relational policy context for small specialist institutions with HEFCE as well as the interpersonal relationships between the seven CEOs themselves who collectively formed the CADISE Policy Group. Thirdly, the research examined an emerging practice strand that captured the learning about the concept, skills and practice of collaborative management through the experience of the seven Principals and Chief Executive Officers, collectively known as the Policy Group.

These three strands of a chronology, relations and practice are further added to by the individual interview data gathered from Policy Group members and together form a platform for identifying skills that help to accommodate an understanding of the role of ‘strategic intent’ and ‘messiness’ in collaborative management. However, before leaving the timeline of the research approach in respect of the evolving themes and constructs, it is important to note that the concept of ‘the legitimacy of messiness’ and de Rond’s (2003) work on Strategic Alliances in the Biotechnology Industries as ‘social facts’ became a central pillar informing the research in the latter part of the study. The synergies between his work advocating the need to recognise that strategic alliances cannot accommodate a monist rationale approach adopting one ‘sensible’ answer when without exception he finds them all as exemplars of heterogeneity, and the complex, multi-faceted and multi-dimensional findings from the CADISE model are apparent. The paradoxes and conundrums that surfaced in the practices and processes of collaborative management within CADISE lent themselves well to a paradigm of the ‘legitimacy of messiness’ as a vehicle for understanding better the ‘multiplex’ of conditions and factors present in collaborative management.
The pillar of 'legitimacy of messiness' together with its counterpart in this research of the concept of 'strategic intent' is set out in diagrammatic form below as surrounding the substantive elements of the research process.

**FIGURE 20: TWIN PILLARS OF 'STRATEGIC INTENT' AND 'LEGITIMACY OF MESSINESS' AS CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS**

- Policy, Process and People approach influenced by observations from CADISE deliberations and *Developing Collaborative Management Skill* project learning about managing the context, content and process of collaboration together with earlier influences of 3 'P' models (Mintzberg, Bartlett & Ghoshal)
- Framing the research questions about 'what is going on here, apart from the obvious?' (Alvesson) and scoping the literature
- How do we understand collaborative management?
  - What are the factors that are influencing the growth of consortia/partnership activity?
  - What are the drivers/attractors for the formation of this particular consortia?
  - What can be learnt about the practices and processes of collaborative management from the research case study?
- Research and analysis of the data:
  - Chronology, relational and practice strands through analysis of the account
  - Field research, CEO stories about collaborative management, from two levels of experiential learning and practice
  - 'Others' accounts of CADISE Collaborative Management Learning and Practice
- Interpretation of Themes and Enfolding the Literature

From the account, the accounts of 'others' and the interview data the theme of strategic intent, both individual and collective became foregrounded in this research. Drucker (1992) has said that the first task of leadership is "to be the trumpet that sounds a clear sound" and in this research it became clear that although short term success could be achieved without a common strategic intent - loosely coupling around the purposes of preservation of specialist institutions - a 'long-sight' to reveal the opportunities of tomorrow required a common strategic intent in order to motivate focus on core competencies and to translate rhetoric into reality.
The dynamics of the policy context with its perpetual threat to dash the potential of a common intent, the people dimension with the changing demands of what it means to be a leader in the collaborative context, and the processes to enable both the ability to collaborate and compete successfully in a hostile environment with limited resources all had implications for the consortium's structure and top management role and style. In order to innovate, to challenge assumptions, to seek out and find new markets and 'to fold back the future to the present' (Hamel and Prahalad's 'visionary swoop') there had to be a strategic intent about 'ends' although not necessarily about 'means'. The absence of the clear and shared 'ends' and the quest to achieve this turned out to be a fundamental strand of the research. The processes involved were 'messy' multi-faceted and multi-dimensional and it was found that the 'multiplex' of factors needing to be taken simultaneously into account and the bringing to the table of rational practices of management from the traditional CEO role, did not translate well or easily to the collaborative management context.

While it can be seen that at the beginning of the research the 'concept map' in Figure 19 was already complex and recognised the various dimensions that would have to be drawn upon in order to build an understanding of collaborative management, by the end of the research through attempting to understand the parallel dimensions of people, process and policy context a more manageable template for handling collaborative management emerged. It is hoped that his might be of value to others contemplating form such collaborative relationships.

3.0 BUILDING A SKILLS MODEL OF UNDERSTANDING AND HANDLING COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

The findings from this research (Chapters 8, 9 and 10) form a basis for suggesting a possible model for understanding and handling the skills that support and underpin effective collaborative management. Various clusters of skills have been built around the three dimensions of people, process and policy and through identification of further associated clusters serve as a variant of the 3'P' model evolved by Ghoshal and Bartlett (1994) for collaborative leaders. This model is termed a 'Collaborative Management Process model for the 21st Century' and comprises some nine 'Ps' that correlate with aspects of people, process and policy, and whose natural home, it is argued, is situated within one of the three main dimensions of this research.
The representation of the three dimensions of collaborative management moving clockwise from top left to bottom, and in the order of 'people', 'process' and 'policy dimension' has been deliberately chosen in that configuration. This reflects the centrality of individual 'people' in forming, maintaining and sustaining collaborative management, together with their management of 'process' and taking note of their need to be both proactive and reactive to the 'policy environment' in which they operate. It reconfigures the order in which the dimensions of the research were approached which was initially one of the policy context, then people (leadership) and finally the processes.
3.1 THE 'PEOPLE' CLUSTER: PERSONALITIES, PERCEPTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES; POWER; PASSION AND PATHOS

People as human actors play a key role in shaping the dynamics of collaborative management, and it can be seen throughout this case study that the research is a 'socialised' one grounded in a contextualised and historical setting. One of its key findings was that it was not possible to have a mechanistic or engineered approach to collaborative management that fails to take account of people's personalities, perceptions, perspectives, their approaches to power (both as proponents and recipients of it) and the passion and pathos that accompanies such a venture. Hamel and Prahalad (1989, 1994) in their work on strategic intent honed in on the broad and fresh insights that people when unfettered by straitjacketed narrow perspectives, bring. They recognised strategy as "multi-faceted, emotional as well as analytical and concerned with meaning, purpose and passion".

Data generated from both the account of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project and the CEO interviews suggest scenarios where peoples' approaches to the same set of circumstances differ because of personal perceptions and reactions. Whether at the end of the day a decision could sit comfortably with them or not fundamentally affected the collaborative because of the ramifications for each individual and institution and the potential for discomfort to grow and mutate into something else. An example is the differing perspectives evident in embracing and working with HEFCE as a means to an end. While for some this was a naturally strategic way to go, (some wishing to send out what they perceived as "the right messages to HEFCE") others got carried along in the enthusiasm despite their more reticent approach, while some were quite clear that they wanted to distance themselves entirely from the Funding Council).

Personal circumstances in terms of power to act also came into play with shifting roles (despite the egalitarian nature of an equal seat at the table) such as the move of an individual member from a large 'more powerful' institution to a smaller, less resourced one and the perspectives of being able to offer the capacity and capability of one's own institution to act. Both position power (derived from the position held within CADISE) and personal power (that is expert power derived from competence or special knowledge, influential power from attractiveness to others and connectivity power deriving from networks and relationships) is social and relational. While power is often thought of as residing in the individual person, it is in fact generated and
located in relationships. It is important, therefore, to note the sort of relationships that actually generated power of the collective and what sorts of relationship in turn were viewed as draining it away.

On many occasions in the research there were suggestions about the power of CADISE as individuals in the collective, and about its potential to influence various stakeholders. From the CEO interview data there was also an instance where an individual CEO talked about feeling 'bullied', which evidenced that in his mind at least the 'oppressor/victim' state existed, that the power dynamic was such that it could cause influence in a set of circumstances and consequently act as an inhibitor of performance. In turn, bad experiences with power can often cause the opposite of bullying or being bullied, which is 'withdrawal' and a consequent deferral of decision making. This, too, was evident in the many instances where in the absence of an agreed decision making mechanism, the power of veto or one or two members resulted in no decision being made and a kind of 'lacuna' taking place.

Emotions of passion and pathos similarly played a significant part in the 'people' cluster of collaborative relations. CADISE CEOs were both bound and bonded by their passionate commitment to the delivery of their arts, design and communication discipline in the specialist institutional setting. CADISE was an extension of this passion for some as a platform for the 'specialist institutional voice' although the commitment by others was more devoid of any emotional attachment. Many of the Policy Group meetings gave rise to the articulation of fervent expressions of what the consortium could achieve, and conversely because of the personal nature of the association, passions would run high when strong differences of opinion emerged or consensus could not be reached. One of the most memorable of these related to an 'identity' discussion at one of the CEO 'away-days' where heated exchanges took place on whose institution was or was not 'academic' and where aspirations in terms of the Research Assessment Exercise came in to play. Whereas the overall view could have been that it was possible to harness the diversity and differences as a source of reciprocal strength, the discussion deteriorated into a battle of whose institution was 'more' or 'less' academic and the threat that this posed to the others. The resultant damage to the potential and interest of the consortium was significant.

Similarly, pathos emerged in respect of CADISE not clustering around the aspiration of teaching degree awarding powers which could have aided six out of the seven CADISE members, for the missed golden opportunities that might not be available a
second time around, and above all for the fact that at the end of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project the model of collaboration was there, but had not cleaved around one big single achievement such as a CADISE University of the Arts.

Perhaps, as one CEO put it when talking about the difficulties related to the human element of collaboration and the pain experienced by the Policy Group:

"It is really important to the sector to know that this is difficult and all the things that you're working on, you know, that we are all particularly learning about this. People need to know, that if you go gung-ho into similar things, that you've got to have your eyes wide open. So that actually makes this process painful, but it's more important."

3.2 THE 'PROCESS' CLUSTER: POSSIBILITIES AND PARAMETERS; PURPOSE; PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE

This cluster relates to three areas picked out as traditional manifests of rational corporate management and which apply in the collaborative setting as they would in the sole institutional management capacity. The importance of understanding the possibilities and parameters of the venture being embarked upon at its formation stage, in communicating its purpose at inception and constantly revisiting it, as well as putting in place an infrastructure to enhance planning (defined as logically deducing the means to achieve given ends) and performance (based on results and not methods) are vital components of collaborative management.

Both possibilities and parameters and planning and performance are closely linked to ‘purpose’ and in the collaborative setting this is not only about setting specific goals or aims and a more enduring sense of purpose, but to achieve common purpose with others. While on the surface there might appear to be common purpose, this is not a given or a static consensus and can act as a mutating and shifting dynamic that can make sustaining consortium activity a challenge. Purpose goes to the heart of leadership, it is about what the collaborative is formed for and what it is against and the trajectories (whether forward or not) come from what is collectively valued not just in a broad overarching way, but at any moment in time and with regard to each and every current issue.

Leadership is a 'performance art' (Pedler, Burgoyne, Boydell, 2004:51) and 'the collective capacity to create something of value' (Senge, 1999) is demonstrated
through facing up to and tackling tough challenges. However, without clarity of purpose, actions appear to be 'chancy' or erratic, driven by short-term or even random influences. The avoidance of the latter can be seen in the research from the efforts of the Policy Group to create both structure and an infrastructure to accommodate collaborative management, but to also allow capture of choice, chance and inevitability or pure "happenstances" in the shifting higher education dynamic. This was especially acute for small specialist institutions at the beginning of the 21st century. Serendipity and the ability to engage in pragmatic modes of management for the collaborative both have their place in alliances with a need to be poised and ready to harness emerging opportunity as it occurs. The balance between being ready and prepared to act and take risk yet staying true to the steer of the partnership is a feature of the consortium's 'purpose' and is a much needed counter balance to traditional corporate planning with its well defined strategic and operational objectives.

In this research 'purpose' has also been distinguished from vision, which is seen as more ephemeral, and fleeting and as such purpose takes its place as a rational aspect of corporate management. However, the quest for a sense of purpose that includes the future vision and binds to core values remains a constant thread through this research and has been considered within the context of strategic intent, something that Hamel and Prahalad (1996) have suggested resonates with a sense of direction, discovery and destiny and hence takes it outside the realm of a technical and rational process:

_There beats in every person the heart of an explorer...We are all seduced, to one degree or another, by the opportunity to explore the unfamiliar...A strategic intent should offer all the enticing spectacle of a new destination or at least new routes to well-known destinations_

Hamel & Prahalad, 1996:145-146

Scoping purpose, possibilities and parameters, planning and performance is part of the strategy making process. Mintzberg (1999) noted that senior executives often plunge into strategic planning because they think it is the thing to do without ever really knowing what it is or how to use it to its maximum potential. Strategic thinking in the collaborative context fixes CEO minds more about futures, patterns, trends and nuances and can be challenging if traditional CEO activity has been grounded in facts, figures and the 'here-and-now'. The strategic thinking that cannot be ignored in a collaborative management process reflects for example the need to understand, as in the case of CADISE, the Policy Group's own CEO mental maps, their finding a way of being holistic, intuitive, integrating and synthesising, always tapping into their
creative potential, as well as being open to new ways of thinking and learning and being metaphorical about their organisation.

This research demonstrates that during the project the individual members of the Policy Group had the opportunity to think deeply about their own institutions and to build metaphoric models in order make connections and discover new possibilities. It afforded the opportunity to take a guided fantasy into the future and to help prepare a response to inevitable key questions about the collaborative organisation's mission, product and expectations.

3.3 THE 'POLICY CONTEXT' CLUSTER: POLITICS; POSITIONING; PEARLS AND PITFALLS

The third dimension of a collaborative management template set out in Figure 21 above represents a cluster of skills related to the policy environment context. This draws upon the skills identified in the research of managing politics in a collaborative relationship, both the local and personal in the 'backgarden' of the collective and on the wider political front. The literature reviewed in Chapters 4 – 7, to support this research helps an understanding of the complexity of issues for individuals working in higher education institutions at the beginning of the 21st century in the UK and illustrates the importance of working with a degree of political awareness. The government policy driven agendas in relation to widening participation, teaching and learning, employability, research and knowledge transfer and the wider discussions about the role of higher education and institutions representing 'public value' in both the UK and the wider global context are powerful and impossible to ignore and are being driven politically.

Elements of politics and policy primarily surfaced through the positioning of CADISE in the changing higher education territories and represented a platform for political ambition that appealed to some members more than others, and especially in terms of being able to achieve more with less resource. Closely aligned with 'power', the political dimension suggested that CADISE could have a voice and advocate for specialist institutions, both in 'championing the cause' and through formal collaboration as a vehicle for leveraging resources to support diverse areas. One representation of the policy drivers for higher education has been set out by the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education as including fifteen elements such as access and widening participation, regional economic development, rewarding and developing staff, in opportunities for sharing good practice in joint costing and pricing,
libraries and ICT cooperation, in leadership, management and governance, etc (see Appendix 6 for complete list) and CADISE’s mission was such that it felt it was able to make a contribution in all of these.

However, it would seem that the biggest political opportunity for CADISE and the one that collectively brought its closest contact with ‘power’ was the spectre of positioning it as some federal form of identity. This was to be explored through the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. Perhaps because this was the initial intent, but it was not one fully conveyed fully to all members and instead served as a ‘trojan horse’ the resultant delivery of a coherent outcome from the project became fraught with difficulty. This in part was because the project was a catalyst for addressing the formal and informal intents of the CEOs who had brought their institutions to CADISE (or in the case of one CEO, who had inherited membership of CADISE) and the visions of some of the founders did not serve the purposes of the later members.

3.4 PEARLS & PITFALLS

Perhaps it is a unique feature of being pioneering and innovative, that despite CADISE’s many successes, it is easier to detect the ‘pitfalls’ (meaning challenges and potential areas to stunt successful alliance management) that emerged from the account and the CEOs reflections on collaborative management rather than the ‘pearls’. This parallels a lot of the literature on alliance formation and conditions for success, that in many ways is a checklist of what can go wrong. Thus ‘pitfalls’ of particular note include institutions competing with each other for students and other resources, similarity in the vision and mission of institutions which makes them more reluctant to relinquish sole ownership of academic offerings and to identify complementary programmes in other institutions, the fierce guarding of key niche areas, suspicion and resentment of the motives and intentions of stronger and larger institutions, variations of development goals and objectives of institutions, conflicting personalities and lack of direction, regional and geographical differences/distances which makes collaboration more difficult. Others specifically from the CADISE scenario cover the unintended consequences of CEO career moves, the unsettling and effort required when there is an expanded membership and the collaborative arrest that can result where processes are inadequate, e.g. in terms of decision making or having clarity about who speaks (and when) on behalf of the consortium.
The 'pearls' on the other hand are the opportunities to be creative, to engage in something new, to act as a learning organisation, to lever resources and to achieve something that is greater than the sum of its parts. The value of the social relations involved in CADISE was of benefit to the CEOs during a shared 'testing' time in the history of their institutions and the forming of CADISE as an umbrella organisation, undoubtedly served as an opportunity for those who wished to propel them forward and to act as a forcefield against predatory approaches by larger Universities and Institutions. It was a pearl and professional development exercise for the CEOs to come together and form a view in order to secure common goals about what should be happening in consortia and a mutual sharing of institutional perspectives. Perhaps the greatest 'pearl' was that despite the rocky terrain being negotiated, that no one was ever absent from the CADISE Policy Group table for more than one meeting at a time.

3.5 BUILDING A SKILLS MODEL OF COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT THAT IS PLURALISTIC AND NON-LINEAR

While Figure 21 would suggest that elements of the research on collaborative management fall neatly (and rather conveniently) into the clusters above, in fact the reality is different. Collaborative management is not linear and as clear cut as this and indeed even trying to represent and take a rational view flies in the face of much that underpins de Rand's research (2002, 2003). It is acknowledged that collaborative management is in fact much more 'messy' than is suggested by Figure 21 and a more accurate representation calls for many of the clusters in each of the three dimensions to have a second or third home in each of the other dimensions. Thus to show the pluralistic and non-linear epistemological position that requires adoption for a more accurate representation, the diagram would look more like Figure 22 below, suggesting a 'web' of connectivity.

For example, if one takes 'politics' that for the purposes of this model has been assigned a home within the policy environment, this skill or attribute of collaborative management is also intrinsic to 'process'. It is suggested that leaders in the collaborative management context have to think in political terms all the time, understanding that not only are their own institutions political systems, but also that the collective may be one and that their leadership of it is therefore a political process. Politics has been written about as power in action (Van Maurik, 2001:39) with contextual factors affecting the level of political activity including an
organisation's size, the clarity or otherwise of its goals, the scarcity of resources and different perceptions of the options available. In turn it is 'people' who have to make choices and goals in a collaborative will be achieved at the expense of others, so people will play politics to influence others as well as to affect the eventual outcomes.

In relation to the 'possibilities and parameters' of collaborative management they are considered as part of the process of innovation, but equally this aspect of the cluster could relate to the drivers from the policy environment of responding to the market: for the need to be creative and to be open to new ways of thinking and connection. This in itself could be seen as a messy business, because the more there are incentives to structure and organise such scenarios, the greater is the potential for creativity and for exploration of possibilities and parameters to be closed down. This manifested itself on several occasions during the course of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project when it was felt that HEFCE's over-enthusiasm, expectations and ambition for CADISE had a counter-effect and resulted in an assertion of individual institutional autonomy. Forced 'creativity' or perceived pressure to explore possibilities and parameters became anathema to some of the Policy Group and would suggest that innovative models need to be allowed to grow naturally and organically, building on results of previous creativity. Indeed, the advice of Herrmann on the management of 'creatives' is to be clear about the aims and objectives of an exercise from the start and then to give them space.
3.9 THE SPECTRUM OF SKILLS IN COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

A final iteration of the skills model in collaborative management for collaborative leaders indicates a ranking or ‘shading’ of skills according to their use and importance in the emergent consortium context. In Figure 23 below it is suggested that while there should at the very least be an awareness of and a degree of competency in the nine skills clustering around ‘people’, ‘process’ and ‘policy’, the four skills on the right (in grey) are those that are characteristic of general management scenarios. Thus concepts and skills relating to establishing purpose, positioning, planning and performance as well as assessing ‘pearls and pitfalls’ or successes and failures are fundamental or attributes needing to be employed in the collaborative. In addition the three skills depicted in pale blue, take on a new meaning in the collaborative context and are fundamental attributes that represent some of the aspects of the emotional intelligence required of collaborative managers. It is impossible therefore to take a rational, corporate management approach to scoping
the possibilities and parameters of establishing a partnership without employing the softer skills of empathy, being compassionate and being able to be open, self-reflective and engender trust.

The final two skills depicted relate to capabilities capacities and competencies in relation to power and politics. These two are shaded from pale blue to grey to illustrate both their fundamental importance in underpinning collaborative management and that the contexts in which they are employed can escalate or diminish according to whether they are used in a 'hard' way or more subtly. The one thing that is certain is that these two skills are fundamental and underpin collaborative management and need to be used according to a variety of degrees and at a number of levels. Thus in the CADISE case study, members of the Policy Group were working in a politicised higher education environment and the consortium’s existence could be seen as a political response to the situation that small specialist institutions found themselves in. The stakes therefore were high and managing the complexities of political agendas emanating from the external environments together with the internal awareness of power and the opportunities for extending personal power from within, serve to illustrate that for those contemplating alliance relationships the skills of managing power and politics are essential.
FIGURE 23: UNDERSTANDING AND HANDLING SKILLS OF COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT: SPECTRUM SHADES FROM SOFT TO HARD SKILLS
CHAPTER 12 – CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Think of it as juggling a ball. Keeping one ball in the air is relatively easy. As additional balls are added, the task becomes increasingly difficult. The same can be said for creating and managing successful collaborations. The powerful impact of these factors is revealed when they are considered together and the effects of their interactions are recognised (Armacost, M 2002:3)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This research on how we understand collaborative management at the beginning of the 21st century in the higher education context was prompted by a practitioner need to explore, examine and explain its emergent practice. The fact that the CADISE Policy Group had identified a project on Developing Collaborative Management Skills reflected a number of ambitions including the part that a collaboration of small specialist institutions could play in contributing to models of exportable collaborative management, how it might have application to other combinations of HEIs (or HEIs and Further Education Colleges), as well as the more basic attraction that this would be an opportunity open to them collectively to participate in a prestigious HEFCE funded special initiative, that would not be available to them individually because of their limited institutional scale. The project as described to HEFCE involved both developing skills in collaborative management to help Chief Executives embed an inclusive shared culture and technological leadership across the partner institutions as well as developing a good practice model for the sector and illustrating the examples of the benefits of a dedicated consortium.

The three strands of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project were set out in Chapter 1 (page 21). These had relatively soft measurable outcomes centring on research outputs from a consideration of a typology of models of collaboration in the HE sector and demonstration of a range of activity from institutional or sub-institutional partnership activity through to merger activity (as well as positioning CADISE within the spectrum); the cultural mapping of the individual CADISE partner institutions, with a view to defining a collaborative culture and involving professional development through a series of CEO workshops; and finally researching the impact of technology on managing collaboratively.

However, this thesis is drawn much wider than the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project itself and asks the fundamental question 'how do we understand collaborative management in the higher education context of strategic

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partnerships?" The rationale for this question relates to the fact that there had not, previously, been a scoping of the literatures or a process model that could act as a 'road map' that the Policy Group and others contemplating such ventures could follow to achieve aspirations of engaging in the business of collaborative management. As project co-ordinator and as a practitioner researcher, I would have valued a coherent body of research to which to refer at the beginning of the project and one that would provide an evidence base to support the suggestion that in order to survive and flourish in the twenty first century higher education institutions need to recognise mutual inter-dependence and engage in partnerships, rather than compete unnecessarily and inefficiently.

The contribution to new knowledge from this thesis is, therefore, through setting the management of strategic partnerships, and academic consortia in a clearly defined context, by aiding an understanding of the underlying dynamics that underpin the management of consortia and impact on partnership performance and by bringing together a disparate literature into a coherent framework to which any future practitioner or those contemplating collaborative relations might refer.

At the end of this research and after examining the forms of strategic collaborations, partnerships and alliances in the higher education sector that have emerged in different guises, deeper understanding of the processes of collaborative management would seem an important component. From the many models that exist and operate in diverse forms (across international boundaries e.g. Worldwide Universities Network, Universitas 21; in regional contexts e.g.Unis4NE, Yorkshire & Humberside Universities Association, the White Rose Consortium; and for specific purposes e.g. Foundation Degrees Consortia and Lifelong Learning Networks) it can be seen that each relates to and relies on the interaction with the policy context operating at a global, national, regional or local level and in combination with an equally multi-layered people and process dynamic. This suggests that the understanding of each, together with the process and the practice of partnership and their application in the higher education context can only add value in a complex and emerging area. I would argue further that such an understanding is a pre-requisite to ensuring sustainable alliance management.
It was noted by Duke (2002: 81) in his work on institutional leadership and management in HE (referenced in this research at the end of Chapter 7: page 169) that the tacit knowledge and instinctual practice in higher education collaborative arrangements maybe ahead of the study of organisations working together. Taking this further it can be suggested that there is a need for a strong theoretical and academic framework against which to gauge practice and the motivations for formation, success and achievement. This research with its 'policy' 'people' and 'process' paradigm makes a first step to achieving this.

2.0 THE POLICY, PEOPLE AND PROCESS PARADIGM FOR UNDERSTANDING COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT AND THE TWIN PILLARS OF LEGITIMACY OF MESSINESS AND STRATEGIC INTENT

The paradigm described above has operated as a robust platform and sensitising framework for understanding collaborative management in this doctoral study. Together with the twin theoretical constructs of the legitimacy of messiness (de Rond: 2002) and strategic intent (Hamel and Prahalad: 1989) it has helped to develop the thesis that collaborative management is new, different and complex and that it calls for different approaches and ways of managing alliances in order to accommodate the uncertainty and ambiguity that the changing world of higher education faces in the 21st century.

After establishing what collaborative management may mean in the context of this research, the case study charted the dynamic and interaction of the three dimensions as experienced by the Policy Group. Rather than collaborative management existing as a static phenomenon, the research demonstrates the dynamics at work and how the Policy Group in their relentless pursuit of both understanding its components and how to practice, faced a turbulent policy context, surges and pauses in their own learning and application, followed by 'what to do next' moments. This provided me as researcher with, not only the opportunity to develop a chronology of collaborative management, but also to present a snapshot of relational and practice activity as well as an exemplar of the multifaceted nature of the processes involved. The shifting policy context with its potential to dash both individual and collective strategic intents that were still embryonic and fragile - the tentative building of relationships at the same time as working intensely on collaboratively building and managing the consortium and the resultant learning about the concept and processes involved in collaborative management whilst intuitively practising it, all combined to present, not
only a unique opportunity to research and capture experiential learning, but to locate it within a theoretical framework of complexity, messiness and differing strategic intents.

Because the aim in this thesis was to scope a new and emerging area there are aspects that pose potential new avenues of research in the collaborative context that others might wish to develop. Among these are the parallels drawn between inter-organisational collaboration and activity taking place in the European Union that include infrastructure arrangements to accommodate enlargement, issues of subsidarity and the 'nation state' as well as more practical protocols relating to decision making, achieving consensus and 'how to' employ skills of persuasion, influence and negotiation. Other areas worthy of further research include the dynamic of trust in relationships and the process of achieving an alliance culture. It is important to recognise that the people, cultural or 'socio-organisational' dimension is crucial to success when striving to advance collaborative ventures. Development of a facilitative culture paves the way for a harmonised way of working, enables productive collaboration and encourages the creation of an intimacy that supports staying together and sharing.

In reaching conclusions from this research, linkages are required inter and intra the three dimensions of 'policy' 'people' and 'process', assimilating and synthesising the respective literatures, together with the data generated from the account, the external views of CADISE (through the HEFCE review of CADISE as part of the Evaluation of the Restructuring and Collaboration Fund, and the review by XYHE Consultants) and the final round of interviews with the CEOs. These linkages help to provide answers to the three related research questions identified within the thesis surrounding the external factors that have influenced the growth of academic consortia in the higher education sector and CADISE in particular; how and why CADISE and the collaborative management concept developed - i.e. an exploration of the factors that attracted the Principals and CEOs to the concept of CADISE in the first place; and finally what practices and skills emerged to support collaborative management from the Policy Group's collective 'life' learning.

The Policy Context for the CADISE Collaborative Management project was particularly influenced by the two great landmarks of the Dearing Report 1997 and the impending White Paper 'The Future of Higher Education' that appeared eventually in January 2003. While in the first, as has been noted by Sir David Watson (himself
a member of the Dearing Committee) *you needed to understand the spirit of the times* (2007:1) and that there was *a real sense of crisis in UK higher education* (2007:1), the second landmark, the White Paper, was awaited as a panacea that could clearly set the steer for higher education’s future.

In his professorial lecture *Whatever happened to the Dearing Report*, Watson set out the Dearing Committee backdrop as one of significant lurches of policy from contraction to expansion and then to what he noted had euphemistically been termed as ‘consolidation’. He contextualised the major changes in governance and organisation (from institutional stratification to radical de-stratification) and from ‘national’ consolidation of funding methods with the end of the ‘binary line’ to territorial devolution, and, above all the constraints of under funding. While certain aspects of the White Paper, (expected at the latest by most higher education commentators in the summer of 2002 - some five years after Dearing) were anticipated and had been broached or tackled to a greater or lesser degree by the CADISE Policy Group e.g. expansion through foundation degrees, university status possible on undergraduate degree awarding powers only, potential deregulation of fees, knowledge exchanges, etc., others such as Centres of Excellence in Teaching and Learning offered new collaborative as well as sole institutional potential. The White Paper’s long evolutionary process had only heightened the state of anticipation and speculation by stakeholders in the sector and when it made its final entrance caused surprise both in terms of production of such a slim document, as well as what had not been anticipated because it had been drafted and re-drafted entirely in secret and by civil servants (supported by the Funding Council).

It was against this backdrop and within this snapshot of time that CADISE planned its formation, delivered the outcomes of the *Developing Collaborative Management Skills* project and aspired to lay solid foundations for its contribution in the complex arena of competition, collaboration and complementarity in higher education. However, while the rationale was strong and CADISE having set out its stall in its Heads of Agreement (May 1999), appeared equipped to champion institutional diversity and to demonstrate through the project why even the most powerful institution could not really go it alone in the 21st century, the turbulence of the policy dynamic in practice made it an unenviable role for any sole Vice Chancellor or CEO, let alone for those attempting to build new relationships and work collectively in a collaborative context and consortium setting.
The literatures drawn on to inform the policy dimension of this research were tackled according to a hierarchy of the global higher education policy context, the UK higher education policy context, drilling down finally to a small number of higher education institutions. This allowed me to cast the net widely, to explore current concerns in each sphere and assisted an understanding of the context of the formation and operation of CADISE, as well as assess their impact upon the partnership and the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. It is therefore, research located in a particular period of time and produces a strong historical perspective.

A consistent voice relied on throughout the research and an academic commentator who continues to publish widely in the area of policy and practice, crossing over adeptly, from analysing the policy context, to actually influencing and setting it, is Sir David Watson. His astute commentary and championing of the practice of collaboration has formed a thread liberally woven through the policy context of this research. He has been persuasive in setting the scene for collaborative management. The research has encompassed his views encapsulated as part of historical commentary and as a member of the Dearing Committee, his collaborative practice as Vice Chancellor of the University of Brighton drawing on experience with his counterpart at the neighbouring University of Sussex and through other institutions in the first HEFCE funded Lifelong Learning Network, his strategic advice in his key practitioner text on 'Managing Strategy', and as Chair of the UUK Longer Term HE Strategy Group. In addition, he had a more personal involvement with the CADISE 'Developing Collaborative Management Skills Project through being part of the culminating Collaborative Management Conference in February 2002 and giving the keynote speech on 'Drift and Mastery: reflections on Collaboration in UK HE.'

What was discovered from the research in both the account, the analyses of the external view about CADISE and the interviews with the CADISE Policy Group CEOs was that the policy context, far from being just one component, is a central and significant dynamic in collaborative management. It more often than not operated through both 'carrot and stick mechanisms', something demonstrated vividly in the research in HEFCE's approach to the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project where the 'something for something' approach was never far away. For CADISE the attraction of more carrots, on the one hand, but equally the fact that as small specialist institutions they were more vulnerable to the 'stick' acted as a lure to widen their critical mass through collaborative relations and particularly within the context of a grouping of cognate small HEIs. The policy environment acted both as a
driver for incentivising, seeding and setting up collaborative relations, as well as a navigation system offering the spectre of attractive destinations. If one was uncertain of where one wanted to go, the attraction of material gain and a place in history as an innovative pilot model of collaboration, or more simply of 'playing for extra time' to ease immediate pressures suggested compelling reasons 'why staying in and doing nothing' was not an option at that time for the diminishing number of specialist institutions.

Important as the policy imperative is, it cannot stand alone as a driver and determinant of successful collaborative management. The 'people' dimension focusing on CEOs individually and collectively as collaborative managers has served to both scope and then weed out a large literature on theories and models of leadership and management. Trying to capture the skills competencies and capabilities of leaders in collaborative management as well as exploring more recent academic writing on emotional intelligence, the resolution of 'wicked issues' and the role of trust in engendering risk taking and mutuality illustrates that this second dimension of collaborative management can be equally as dynamic, shifting and multi-faceted as the policy context. While much has been written about leadership and management and models of strategic alliances very little has been written about collective leadership in the collaborative context.

Closest to this research in terms of academic interest is what has been written about 'distributed leadership' whereby the leadership process in higher education is conceived of as dispersed across the organisation — within systems and relationships. rather than focusing on the traits and capabilities of formally-recognised leaders. Recent research (Petrov, Bolden and Gosling: 2006) has suggested that there is no clarity about what is distributed in terms of power and accountability, the processes by which it happens or whether the concept offers benefits for analysis and policy making.

While as argued in Chapter 6 (page 118) there are clear marks of differentiation between current distributed leadership research in higher education and the CADISE context, data from the case study demonstrates how power relations were handled amongst the membership. There were difficult issues and feelings about accountability and rising to the challenges of putting in place mechanisms that demonstrate not just equal but equitable access to processes that support collaborative management. Theoretically within CADISE, power was ceded to the
Chair of the Policy Group, but in practice various other devices came into play that suggested CEOs were still acting autonomously rather than collaboratively (e.g. episode with the CEO of Bryanstone and the HEFCE Regional Consultant/Project Observer: page 196).

From an outsider perspective, as suggested by the HEFCE Evaluation of Collaboration in the HE Sector, the CADISE model of collaborative management demonstrated that collaboration could be a ‘comfortable middle position between the extremes of autonomy and merger’, that it showed the value of a regional institutional alliance based on subject coherence with the likelihood that it was sustainable in its present form in the longer term, but in parallel and simultaneously it can be seen that the internal deliberations, pressures and need to meet expectations of delivering something innovative were reaching a crescendo for the Policy Group.

Similarly whilst being commended as a model of collective leadership with strong central management (more akin to McNay’s (2005) culture of the corporate enterprise rather than the collegium) and an example of good practice set in the context of “academic institutions’ ambivalence toward leadership” (HEFCE Evaluation of Collaboration in the HE Sector, 2002:13) the backstage and understage machinations of collaborative management might suggest a very different story to those unacquainted with measuring collaborative success. Within CADISE there was, therefore, the pull of different strategic opportunities and directions and the self-doubt about whether participation and performance were fast or powerful enough; about whether collaborative ties were embedded or resting on the surface; or whether the attraction to achieve short term gains and successes were sufficient to sustain a consortium that could not, despite its greatest efforts reach a common and comfortable agreement about its main purpose.

All of the above challenged the skillset to be determined for CADISE as collaborative leaders. A core issue remained how to create a coherence of leadership that was made more difficult by virtue of the fact of the relationship of equality between them. Layer upon layer of complexity was demonstrated throughout the research that was alien to the Policy Group as autonomous CEOs in their sole institutional context where they had considerable power and authority in determining future direction. Not only were they unable to walk away from the table easily, to sack each other other, or even to take counsel from each other easily in the context of collaborative management (supporting Kennie and Woodfield’s proposition (2006) that “team
working at the top is an unnatural act") but such progress as there was, did not take place in a recognisable form or linear development. Instead it comprised breakthroughs, unexpected highs, followed by pregnant pauses of frustration, punctuated equilibrium, and in many ways resembled a game of ‘snakes and ladders’.

However, despite this through using discussion and dialogue to shape future strategy an unassailable feeling of ‘value-added’ together with conscious and pre-conscious learning about what collaboratively managing entailed was forged on the anvil of reality.

With regard to the third dimension of ‘process’, at the outset of this research it was believed that the key to collaborative management in higher education might lie in the process literature. There was an idea that perhaps someone, somewhere like me would have either accessed or started researching interorganisational networking and forms of alliance and have a process model that could act as a guide for the practitioner. However, in the absence of much academic writing and even less to be found in the higher education context, the focus of the process literature that was most useful could be located in the area of organisation development and contextual processes, and drawing on conceptual models of cooperative strategy from business. Of particular use were the ten building blocks of interorganisational synthesis suggested by Pitsis, Clegg and Kornberger (2004), that influenced this research halfway through.

The more manageable grouping of these by Tyrrell (2004) into three main themes of: formal structures; knowledge and material resources; and ideology and emotion, provided an umbrella under which the more detailed panoply of factors suggested by Pitsis Clegg and Kornberger could be examined. In trying to get to the heart of understanding collaborative management and to ascertain what was going on in the CADISE case study, it became evident that while formal structures and knowledge and material resources played their part, most of the emerging data in the research related to the area of ideology and emotion, with its constituent areas of trust, alliance culture, leadership, vision and mission. Herein lay the territories that singly and in combination led to the core of understanding collaborative management and which could be made sense of in the CADISE context by the overlay of the theoretical constructs of legitimacy of messiness and individual and collective strategic intents.
Focusing on collaborative management as a symbol, the two basic questions surrounding it related to questioning the social relations at the base of the collaboration and how individuals act within it. These theoretical aspects of management guidance posed by Pitsis, Kornberger and Clegg (2004) as underpinning the ten building blocks of interorganisational synthesis were mirrored in practical considerations at the CEO workshops to support the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. The findings in Chapter 9 on the importance of trust and how it operated at different ends of the spectrum can be detected both in the account and the final round of CEO questions. Thus if trust is absent collaborative relations could not be established (see for example the views of Professor Rhodes of Sunnybank Institute, page 338) and at the other end too much trust or indeed patience (page 335) would suggest a non-questioning of partners members actions and behaviours. Trust in collaborative relations as noted in Chapter 6 has often been a subject of academic interest after the demise of strategic alliances and therefore the 'live' process of seeing how trust issues play out in this and future case studies remains a rich and fertile territory of further study.

The formation of a collaborative culture from investigation of individual institutional cultures was a central facet of both the project and this research and is of critical importance to synthesis. Just how to create a new organisational culture is closely related to vision and mission, and while the 'front stage' of publicising this and setting it out in the Heads of Agreement worked well initially, and as something that sustained the consortium easily in its early days, the temptation to challenge and not follow it blindly, but simply as a 'designer culture', in turn led to difficult terrain. Pitsis, Kornberger and Clegg observe that the advantage of collaborative culture is that it can be more mechanical, devoid of the organic and 'deep sedimented' baggage that institutional cultures carry. However, within the CADISE Policy Group there was a resistance to the 'letting go' and buying in to this mechanical culture and in turn the desire to transport elements of organic growth, more suited to an institutional culture, kept finding its way into the collaborative context.

Returning to the style of leadership in collaborative management, this is of fundamental importance if interorganisational synthesis is to be achieved. Because of the complex pattern of human relations of individuals who are already peers and leaders, the capacity to perceive emotion, integrate it into thought and at the same time continue to process, understand and manage it, is critical and as can be seen, was never far away. Chapter 6 examined the literature on emotional intelligence
and through various episodes in the research it can be seen that sustaining the consortium requires a leadership team with a representation that is high on emotional intelligence and task structure – those who are both able to read context, stakeholder needs and expectations. However, alongside the ability to think about their institutions' contribution to the political, economic, social and technological environment factors in higher education is the fact that collaborative management does not always preclude the need to be autocratic and to take tough decisions and has a need to engage with the more spiritual approach to leadership.

This research demonstrated the journey and considerations in trying to discover where in fact the collective strategic intent lies in a collaboration. In part this traced where and what was the emotional and intellectual energy for the CADISE Policy Group and explored Hamel and Prahalad's proposition that collaborating to compete is necessary for firms in the 21st century and where "strategic architecture is the brain, but strategic intent is the heart". A shared strategic intent undoubtedly existed for many, but the need to articulate it and the perceived pressures to revisit it often against such a swiftly changing policy backdrop, suggested a 'neediness' and lack of confidence in it its own collective ability to be proactive together rather than reactive individually and collectively.

Within the thesis it is argued that 'vision' is the grand design of where the collaboration wants to end up at some future point, whereas mission is the identified statement of the consortium's stated objectives and intentions of how it will get to go where it wants to go. The Developing Collaborative Management Skills project was in practice a vehicle for testing out how robust the partnership was in practice and against the mission articulated in the Heads of Agreement. What was missing from the Heads of Agreement was an explicit vision, and perhaps even more significant was that there were a number of implicit different visions that surfaced at times during the project: they were hinted at, glimpsed, at some times articulated and explored (when prompted by some external crisis or by the Project Facilitator), but then denied as if CADISE was actually about something else. This behaviour remained fascinating but became almost a permanent feature of CADISE's existence.

While what literature there is on the process of strategic alliances suggest that there must be agreement on common vision and mission in order to make a collaboration viable in the first place and sustainable in the longer term, it would also seem that the
collaboration must be aligned to objectives in practice. There is ample evidence to suggest that at many points where a rational approach and grounded management approach would work in a sole institutional setting, it does not translate well to the collaborative context where ideology and emotion play a much greater part. The whole business of collaborative management is indeed, much more messy and very quickly takes on a life of its own, appearing at times to surprise and confound its very architects.

3.0 SOME PARADOXES AND PERPLEXITIES OF COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

From the significant volume of data generated in this case study and the many findings, there are three particular paradoxes that I wish to highlight — one each relating to the dimensions of policy, people and process. These, I believe, stand out in relation to the primary and related research questions on the growth of academic consortia, the attractions of the Policy Group to CADISE in particular and the concept and practice of collaborative management and in turn suggest the complexities and perplexities involved in understanding this area.

The first concerns a fact identified in Chapter 1 of this thesis about the inexorable draw to alliance activity, despite statistics (varying from a third to a half) that indicate a persistently high failure rate with consortia activity likely to disappoint in as many as 90% of cases. While the post-script to this research might similarly indicate an ‘ending’ consistent with the way most alliances go, it is suggested that this research on CADISE can help provide evidence that the definitions of ‘success’ and ‘failure’ are imprecisely defined in collaborative activity. If one takes ‘longevity’ as the measure of success, almost certainly, most alliances end up as predictable failures.

As part of de Rond’s call for a need to understand the proliferation of and increasing recourse to collaborative activity in the face of such apparent high failure rates, findings from this research support the view that there are many other measures of success that take place in the process of collaborative management that fall short of ‘time served’. In alliance activity these may be far more subtle and be somewhat eclipsed by the predictable outcome that alliance relationships are in fact time-limited. Thus within the research it can be detected from the account and confirmed by the CEO interviews that a powerful process of experiential learning was taking place, that a levelling of the playing fields between stronger and weaker, larger and smaller, more experienced and less experienced institutions within the consortium
was occurring, as well as a growth of expertise in being able to compete collectively with larger 'players' in the sector. This was happening (at least in the early days of the study), organically and voluntarily and while pump-primed initially by HEFCE it gave a greater than anticipated return on investment with success and achievement in successive and independently arbitrated competitive bidding rounds and across a wide range of policy areas. Additionally the 'value-added' through staff development for the CEOs an area where traditionally top management felt there was not a need 'to be developed further' and the collective learning in a peer context where CEOs could not easily walk away from each other in the consortium scenario, were all significant measures of success and value.

The second paradox is one epitomised by a response from a member of the Policy Group when exploring what attracted individuals to join an academic consortium in the first place, and CADISE in particular. Professor Rhodes commented (Chapter 10, page 327) that:

*From where they've [CEO members of the Policy Group] come from, they are quite manically joined together in the spirit of preserving their independence, so they're not joined together to be together, but joined together to remain detached.*

This statement suggests the complexities of not only personal relationships, but the responsibilities of each and every CEO as the custodians of 'specialist institutions' and what kept them at the table through the roller-coaster of events that took place in the period covered by this research. In many ways, CADISE was a mixture of a very personal, yet public venture, and therefore at times passions and pathos featured highly. Professor Rhodes' statement goes to the heart of the context where a significant and not openly articulated shared common purpose was bubbling away and with an implicit prize that was either consciously or sub-consciously recognised by all members of the Policy Group. The real prize was that perhaps individual institutional autonomy and independence could somehow be preserved through collaborating with others, that collaboratively managing a consortium could somehow offer opportunity of not only 'autonomy from...' but 'autonomy to...' find away through the myriad of opportunities and obstacles in the policy dynamic. The stakes were high in the context that was being researched. The decline in the number of specialist institutions, as larger predatory institutions courted each of them and suggested their 'hand in marriage', the spectre of a more challenging policy context making it even more difficult for delivery of the curriculum and survival in the specialist institutional context and the individual and collective CEO intuition, that
somehow if they could just 'hold on' that they might be able to escape under HEFCE's radar until the growing realisation that 'small and specialist can equal excellence' as a growing policy theme took hold.

The third paradox relates to another phrase put forward by a member of the Policy Group in the final round of interview that 'the more we collaborate the more difficult it becomes'. From observing the practice of collaborative management over three years, this in effect sums up what happens. The increase in learning and knowledge about each other did not result in an exponential understanding and sense-making of the concept and practices in collaborative management. While creating opportunity for early wins and a sense of urgency to build on initial success appeared relatively easy, as the journey through collaboration continued the commitment to the partnership required a proportionately greater effort as partners learnt more and more about each other 'warts and all'. Collaborative management, as has been argued at many points in this thesis is multi-faceted and multi-dimensional. In the CADISE context this required an in-depth understanding of the changing higher education dynamic, institutional histories, cultures and ambitions, personal histories and ambitions, regional contexts, personal traits and high level skills in both strategic management and inter-personal relations. This leads to the quotation used as an introduction to this chapter by the US researcher, Mary Armacost (2002), who in examining the institutional perspective of CEOs/leaders in collaborative ventures noted that each of the factors that arise in managing collaborations must be attended to simultaneously, Armacost comparing this to a juggler with more and more balls to juggle.

Much of the CADISE research centred on the quests for purpose, clarity of vision and direction setting that are fundamental to the leadership role in alliance management. While this was never under-estimated, the working out of this as a task became like searching for the 'pot of gold' at the end of the rainbow. Perhaps requiring a tightly drawn clear vision, corporate mission, aims and objectives just simply does not suit a process that is based on trust, mutuality and the more spiritual side of leadership. What was required was something more loosely coupled that could allow for a strong degree of flex and accommodate the various directions, permutations, idiosyncrasies and feelings that this relationship activity engendered. In practice CADISE in its collaborative setting with the shifting dynamic higher education environment remained open about uncertainty and ambiguity, yet continued to foster a commitment to share responsibility for choosing the next step as part of collaborative
management. The power of relational activity and as a mechanism for working in the 21st century has been expressed as follows:

*The only way to lead when you don't have control is you lead through the power of your relationship. You can deal with the unknown only if you have enormous levels of trust, and if you are working together and bringing out the best in people*  
(Margaret Wheatley, 2002)

Whilst on many occasions this was observed, with so much at stake, individually and collectively the scale of seven different CEOs and seven institutions just posited too many permutations and uncertainties for the challenge of reaching a consensus to move in the direction of a 'University of the Arts' for CADISE.

4.0 REFLECTIONS ON THE ROLE OF THE PRACTITIONER RESEARCHER

The lessons learned through this research on the role of the practitioner researcher, are many, and I believe deep. They make a contribution in terms of considering the ethical dimensions of researching in one's own workplace, the particularly focused aspects in this case of dealing with powerful people, (and especially when they are your immediate 'bosses'), as well as key players and stakeholders in the higher sector who are shaping policy. In addition, there are the more practical concerns for the researcher of ensuring that data capture (which is often not in short supply in the practitioner setting) is grounded in a robust and reliable research design. The combination of adopting a flexible design strategy and a research methodology that moved along a continuum from 'practitioner closeness' to 'researching at a distance' and the exigency to generate different kinds of reliable and verifiable data to capture, interpret and explain collaborative management, at times challenged me not to turn the study into one on practitioner research as opposed to the phenomenon of collaborative management itself.

My desire to tell the narrative saga, yet distance myself sufficiently to be able to provide a rigorous and methodologically defensible piece of academic writing was a recurrent theme throughout the research. There were thus perils of 'conflicting role resolution', the need to avoid 'process contamination' and to be able to both engage with, yet distance my part as 'omniscient narrator'. Some might even argue that I had more than a 'bit part' as player in the controlling of history.

At the end of the day the research was a small-scale, but I believe important, case study relying on insider-based professional practice that could be seen as high in
validity but low in reliability. In attempting to 'wear an investigator's cloak gracefully' (Trafford: 2004) and develop theory and thinking around collaborative management the research question was grounded in the work of CADISE and specifically the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. The research was deliberately limited in scope at the outset, but quickly panned out to encompass scholarly and conceptual enquiry from the many disciplinary bases including education, sociology, psychology, politics as well as business and management and indeed philosophy. As noted in the thesis, the research could only be undertaken by 'looking back' at the period of time of the project, because writing it up in 'real time' just would not have permitted the period of reflection needed.

The work of CADISE always had and continued to have a multidimensional stakeholder element from those with diverse interests, e.g. HEFCE, Regional Development Agencies, the institutions themselves and their validating partners. The spectre of an opportunity to play a part in shaping an alternative - a new and potentially exportable model of collaborative management - other than a loose partnership or a full merger scenario was irresistible to some of the membership and was watched with increasing interest by many in the sector. To get at the 'people' and 'process' dimensions in the research, the ethnographic aspects of the study were paramount and formed a platform from which inductive reasoning resulted in non-generalisable, but very powerful findings in terms of the relational and practice strands. It has been observed in the body of the thesis that, indeed, each of the elements of 'policy', 'people' and 'process' so unravelled that in themselves they each could have been the subject of doctoral research (page 67). Hence, the fact that comprehensive literature reviews underpinning the study were needed in each of the areas in order to bring together an understanding of the factors that impact and have significance when dynamic interactions between each of these dimensions play out in practice.

It remains of interest to me and yet another paradox that despite the location of this study within the conceptual framework of the 'legitimacy of messiness' and 'strategic intent' that as a practitioner researcher I had such an overwhelming desire to make sense of and rationalise the findings in terms of a rather 'neat' series of templates to aid others' understanding of collaborative management. In order to reach such closure it is worth recapping on how the journey took place, from locating the study within the concept of 'mess' and 'strategic intent' which was itself messy to the resultant Figures 21 - 23 in Chapter 11 on the skills models for understanding and
handling collaborative management. When faced with the large amount of data generated from the account (itself written from participant observation of events, summaries, annotation, memos and field notes as well as official formal and informal documentation made at the time), the personal constructs of the participants through semi-structured interviews and the official accounts of 'others' researching CADISE the starting point had to be an analysis of each in terms of 'policy' 'people' and 'process' dimensions. It can be seen from the difficulties of differentiation between the 'people' and 'process' elements with their overlap in terms of culture, trust, leadership (including decision making and managing conflict), and vision and mission as well as the part that the latter played in the policy dimension, that the challenge was to deconstruct each element and break them down further into constituent parts.

The field interviews of the CADISE Policy Group were conducted to elicit further understanding about the concepts, terminology and nature of collaborative management during their course of involvement with the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. As set out in Chapter 3 (page 52) the aim was to tap into their experiences, accounts, interpretations, memories, opinions thoughts, ideas and understandings on collaborative management. While the focus of the semi-structured interviews broached the external factors influencing consortia growth, why the CADISE consortium in particular was attractive to them and considered the necessary skills and success factors for collaborative management, the starting point for categorisation of this data was again the three dimensions of policy, people and process.

However, further categorisations appeared that while undoubtedly influenced by the 'P' models of strategy formation prevalent in management literature, caused some consternation about how easily they lent themselves to further development under the headings of 'P'. Thus in the first iteration of data consideration it happened that politics and institutional positioning emerged as clear codes in the policy context, that the roles of personality, perception and perspective assumed priority as framing categories in relation to people and that investigating the possibilities and parameters of partnership, examining purpose and exploring planning and performance indicators was important in terms of process. Other categories not beginning with 'P' fell out of the data, but at one point and out of interest, over 100 'P's relating to partnership were identified. Great care was taken to check that the 'P' descriptors were not leading the data, but once it was felt that this was not the case, coding and categorising took place manually, although informed by much learning from the
'Nvivo' approach to managing data (adopted early on in the research, but abandoned with a change of computer from PC software to an AppleMac).

5.0 FINAL THOUGHTS ON COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

The study of collaborative management thus presents a new and exciting avenue for understanding how work can be carried out in the education sector through broader participation, investment and creative thinking. During the period of the research partnership working has assumed far more importance and has moved from a position of being considered at the margins to being mainstream. It is asserted that no potential Senior Manager during the job interview process today would fail to be questioned about their experience and approach to partnership and collaboration.

Just why this might be important in terms of strategic partnerships and in the consortia context has been examined in this research and follows the exhortation by Doz and Hamel (1998) cited at the beginning of this thesis that "if the capacity to collaborate is not already in your organisation, you had better get busy making it so".

Professor David Ward, President of the American Council on Education and former Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin, Madison noted in endorsing the CADISE Collaborative Management book published as a result of the project:

*At a time when the level and kind of state support for higher education is in dispute, we should help define our own future by exploring the potentialities of inter-institutional collaboration. CADISE is a pioneer of that future.*

However, as can be seen from this research collaborative management is not a static activity and calls for stamina, patience and resilience. The combination of changing environments, concurrent demands on those involved in its strategy formation and the need for robust processes that are sensitive to and can accommodate multiple players require in turn a multiplex of strategies that are fluid and open to (sometimes quite a fast-paced) evolution.

The thoughts of Sir Howard Newby as Chief Executive of HEFCE at the end of the *Developing Collaborative Management Skills* project and in a quotation to be included on the back cover of the CADISE book on Collaborative Management, noted:

*...we at the Funding Council are trying to increase and incentivise various forms of collaboration.... It is something we are very keen to do and as you are ahead of the game in various respects we can learn from your achievements.*
This stands as a tribute to the work that was undertaken by CADISE in terms of its pioneering form of collaborative management, even though as this research illustrates, it took on a life of its own and did not deliver singly to any one stakeholder’s particular vision of what they wanted it to do (including the Chief Executive of HEFCE). Perhaps this illustrates that the efforts of any leadership group in alliance management, can only set a steer for strategy direction and anticipate broad outcomes. Although members in CADISE had voluntarily identified that they wished to pursue a particular form of relational activity and were wholly aware that it would be complex, the reality of the journey and the uncertainty about its process and practice illustrates that it is not in any way a precise science, or even one that lends itself to many generic principles. It supports the view that as a conceptual cornerstone of the process of collaboration, managing expectations and realities, changing environments, individual and institutional feelings, personalities, pressures and institutional policy imperatives is an ‘untidy business… full of uncharted territories, ambiguities and institutional complexities (Connolly: 1997). Continuing the nautical metaphor, a quotation from Otto Neurath the Austrian philosopher of science, sociologist and political economist is also pertinent:

We are like sailors who must rebuild their ship on the open sea, never able to dismantle it in dry-dock and to reconstruct it out of the best materials”

(otto Neurath 1882–1945)

It is fitting, perhaps, that final words in this conclusion relate back to Watson’s observation made at the CADISE Collaborative Management Conference (Chapter 5:89) that the context of the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project. He noted that institutional collaboration and management is a much messier and contingent experience than existing models suggest. This research has demonstrated over a period of time some of the ‘fragilities’ and ‘irrationalities’ as well as the emerging strengths and opportunities from the process of collaborative management. A recently used metaphor cited by Watson (2007) and attributed to Mike Boxall from PA Consulting, although it was used to illustrate a different aspect of higher education is that of the ‘peleton’ in the Tour de France. Watson noted Boxall’s description of:

Individuals do come out of the pack, to compete for various prizes (‘king of the mountains,’ ‘points’ for sprinting, etc). There’s also the ‘poubelle’ (dustbin) bringing up the rear. But inside the ‘peleton’ itself there is esprit de corps and unwritten rules (leading through your home town, assisting in regrouping after crashes, etc). Members’ of teams work for each other
(including 'domestiques'). Meanwhile the race remains a competition, including simply to finish: they 'could' all ride slower.

This could have equal applicability to the concept of collaborative management, highlighting both some of the attractions and behaviours involved, and goes part way to explaining why embarking on the process of collaborative management, remains irresistible to some.
APPENDIX 1 \times 1

(Please see back cover)
"We will promote the recognition and reputation of individual institutions in delivering excellent learning, teaching, scholarship, research and professional practice. We will act to enhance the significant and distinct contribution, individual and collective, of the specialist institutions of arts, design, media and communication to the well-being of the regions as a whole and the localities which they serve..."

CADISE Heads of Agreement (May 1999)
Consortium of Art & Design Institutions in the South East

Heads of Agreement

May 1999

Mr Stuart Bartholomew
Principal
The Arts Institute at Bournemouth

Professor Gary Crossley
Deputy Director
The Surrey Institute of Art & Design

Professor Robin Baker
Director
Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication

Professor Roderick Bugg
Principal
Wimbledon School of Art
1 Mission

1.1 We, the CADISE partners of specialist institutions, value the diversity of provision within the further and higher education sectors. We will seek mutual benefit through the increased stability and enhanced opportunities available through larger critical mass. We will act flexibly to win advantages of synergy and added value for the consortium as a whole and for individual members.

1.2 We will promote the recognition and reputation of individual institutions in delivering excellent learning, teaching, scholarship, research and professional practice. We will act to enhance the significant and distinct contribution, individual and collective, of the specialist institutions of arts, design, media and communication to the well-being of the region as a whole and the localities which they serve. We will ensure that they play a full part in developing and delivering key economic, social, cultural, environmental and C & IT strategies.

1.3 We are recognised and supported in this mission by the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

2 Aims

- to act as a focus for effective engagement with key regional, national and international agencies, consortia, and funding sources
- to maximise our participation in the development and delivery in the region of key economic, social, cultural and environmental strategies
- to extend our contribution to regional development and competitiveness, specifically by stimulating and promoting relationships with the creative and communication industries and providing to them advice and training opportunities
- to enhance student choice, widen participation and encourage life-long learning by developing a coherent framework of regional opportunity and progression
- to develop learning/teaching and research portfolios and enter new markets by sharing complementary expertise and facilities, including IT solutions, and by spreading development costs and risks
- to add value by sharing good practice in academic and management fields, applying larger critical mass to infrastructure and support services, and achieving economies of scale
- to build collaborative capability by fostering a climate within and across partner institutions which encourages personal contact and supports enterprise
- to encourage wider collaborative activity where this is considered to be beneficial collectively and individually
- to promote good practice in collaboration, and publicise the role of the partners in this activity.
2.2 We will monitor the consortium's performance in achieving these aims. We will review the consortium's aims, structure and operation to ensure these are appropriate in enabling the consortium to respond flexibly and pragmatically to new opportunities and challenges.

3 Structure and operation

3.1 The Policy Group, comprising Senior Executives of the partner institutions, will lead and direct the consortium. Chairmanship will rotate between the partners. The Group will normally meet bi-monthly, and will be assisted by the CADISE Co-ordinator.

3.2 The CADISE Co-ordinator will support the Chair and other members of the Policy Group in representing CADISE externally.

3.3 The Policy Group will determine the method for processing internal funding transactions.

3.4 The consortium will achieve its objectives by convening cross-functional task groups and networking groups of specialists which will report to the Policy Group via the CADISE Co-ordinator. The consortium will also use a range of media to encourage informal personal contacts at every level as a necessary foundation for creating future value.

3.5 Leadership of bids for external funding will be determined by the Policy Group. With the agreement of the Policy Group, successful bids may be top-sliced in support of consortium activity.

4 Membership

4.1 The consortium is not exclusive: we expect membership to evolve. We also expect partners to continue to engage independently, and openly, in a range of relationships.

4.2 Additional members of CADISE will only be admitted in the event of the agreement of the majority of the then members of CADISE and if on a vote for the election of a new member the votes are equal between members the then Chair of the Policy Group shall have a casting vote.

4.3 Any member may resign from CADISE on giving six calendar month's notice in writing (or such lesser notice as may be agreed) to the Chair of the CADISE Policy Group, subject to any existing projects being completed (whether or not being undertaken at the premises of the resigning member). On any such resignation any project funding shall be retained by CADISE to be applied either to existing projects (including for a project carried on at the premises of the resigning member) in accordance with the project funding agreements or in the absence of a project funding agreement for the benefit of CADISE and its remaining members.

4.4 The Chair of the CADISE Policy Group on agreement of the majority of its membership may immediately terminate the participation of any member by written notice:
a) where remedial action to rectify non-performance within reasonable period of time (being not less than one month) specified in writing has been requested by the Chair of the Policy Group and has not been satisfactorily taken; or

b) for any financial irregularity of a serious nature

4.5 Access rights relating to work undertaken on the project before termination shall be granted by any defaulting or withdrawing member on the conditions specified below to any replacing entity undertaking the project. No partner institution shall be entitled to withdraw from or to terminate this Agreement and/or participation in the project unless

a) that member has given six calendar month's notice or secured an agreement as required by clause 4.3 above to the withdrawal or termination

b) that the member's participation is terminated as outlined in clause 4.4 above

c) the licences so granted by the terminating member to the other members and their affiliated concerns shall remain in full force and effect

d) a member shall not by withdrawal or termination be relieved from
   (i) any of its obligations under this Agreement which are intended to survive such an event;
   (ii) its responsibilities under this Agreement; or
   (iii) from any of its obligations or liabilities arising out of such withdrawal or termination.

4.6 It is understood that all confidential information and/or third party materials already produced or belonging to CADISE or relating to its affairs or dealings remains the property of CADISE and will not be disclosed. This restriction does not apply to any information or knowledge which subsequently comes into the public domain other than by way of unauthorised disclosure.

5 Priorities for 1999-2000

5.1 We will, in our first year of operation:

• develop a CADISE identity

• develop an external communications strategy, including a 'CADISE view' where appropriate. Establish relations with all key regional players, particularly the Regional Development Agencies, and selected national agencies. Establish a website.

• develop internal communications. Hold joint seminars, training and development events. Form initial task groups and networking groups to share information and build collaborative approaches. Use website to post key documents, publicise events and achievements, connect people.

• begin to share information in relation to planned academic developments and appropriate market research and market data.

• complete all HEFCE-funded projects on time.
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN DOCTORAL RESEARCH
BY THE SEVEN 'T' POLICY GROUP CEOS
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN ACADEMIC DOCTORAL RESEARCH


As part of the CADISE Policy Group I have given consent for Bethan O’Neil to undertake her PhD Study at the University of Surrey on CADISE as a case study on Collaborative Management. This has as its focus the ‘Developing Collaborative Management Skills Project’ in the context of the development of CADISE as a model of collaborative management.

In addition, I have consented to be interviewed as part of her final research in this area and have been given the opportunity of reading the transcript of the interviews in June 2003 and how it has subsequently been anonymously transcribed.

I have received a copy of the University of Surrey: Code on Good Research Practice.

Signed........................................

Dated ...........................................

Professor Robin Baker
Director
Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication
Walden Road
Chislehurst
KENT BR7 5SN

PhD Supervisor: Professor Robin Middlehurst
Co-Supervisor: Professor John Holford
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN ACADEMIC DOCTORAL RESEARCH

"How do we understand Collaborative Management? – The Possibilities and Parameters of Partnership in Higher Education: A Case Study on CADISE"

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Signed ..............................................................

Dated ..............................................................

Professor Gary Crossley
Principal
Central School of Speech and Drama
Embassy Theatre
Eton Avenue
London NW3 3HY

PhD Supervisor: Professor Robin Middlehurst
Co-Supervisor: Professor John Holford
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Signed:

Dated: 5/1/05

Professor Rod Bugg
Principal
Wimbledon School of Art
Merton Hall Road
London SW19 3QA

PhD Supervisor: Professor Robin Middlehurst
Co-Supervisor: Professor John Holford
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Signed: __________________________

Dated: 23 Dec. 2003

Professor Elaine Thomas
Director
Surrey Institute of Art & Design, University College
Falkner Road
Farnham
Surrey GU9 7DS

PhD Supervisor: Professor Robin Middlehurst
Co-Supervisor: Professor John Holford
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Signed: ..................................................

Dated: ..................................................

Professor Vaughan Grylls
Director
Kent Institute of Art & Design
Oakwood Park
Maidstone
Kent ME16 8AG

PhD Supervisor: Professor Robin Middlehurst
Co-Supervisor: Professor John Holford
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I have received a copy of the University of Surrey: Code on Good Research Practice.

Signed

Stuart Bartholomew

Dated 6th November 2004

Stuart Bartholomew
Principal
The Arts Institute at Bournemouth
Wallisdown
Poole
Dorset BH12 5HH

PhD Supervisor: Professor Robin Middlehurst
Co-Supervisor: Professor John Holford
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I have received a copy of the University of Surrey: Code on Good Research Practice

Signed: Gavin Henderson

Dated: 15/03/2003

Gavin Henderson
Principal
Trinity College of Music
London

PhD Supervisor: Professor Robin Middlehurst
Co-Supervisor: Professor John Holford
PHD INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Thank you for taking the time to do this interview with me for my PhD. You received a summary of the outline of my PhD by email. -This particular stage, is where I am interviewing CEOs to gain their perspective on the GMP project, Developing Collaborative Management skills for Chief Executives.

I am interested particularly in your views of the worth of this project, whether it can be seen as a catalyst for or prerequisite of effective collaboration, what lessons were learnt, and what factors from both it and learnt from the work of CADISE in general, contribute to effective collaboration...... I am also interested in why you might wish to be part of a consortium that wishes to ‘manage’ collaboration and what this term means to you..

This is the final piece of my field work and although it seems a little stilted, I would like to conduct the interview in the role as an empirical researcher. Although we know each other, I would like to conduct the interview as objectively as possible, and if possible for you to treat me as an interested researcher, in the role, for example of John Roberts at the beginning of the project.

We can spend a few minutes at the end of the interview agreeing whether you will happy to use the interview in full in my PhD or whether there are any parts you would on reflection prefer me not to use. I will of course send you a transcript. I’ve sent you an indicative template of what I’d like to go through in the next 1.5 hours, but if there is anything you would like to negotiate with me before you start, I’m happy to do that

START TAPE

CONCEPTS/UNDERSTANDING/TERMINOLOGY –context setting

As you know I’ve centred my research on the concept and practice of collaborative management of academic consortia, using CADISE as a case study. Before I get to some questions related to factors about the growth of Consortia, why you became a member of CADISE and explore the skills necessary/learnt in and for collaborative management, . I wanted to start the ball rolling with some general questions about terminology /concepts / understanding

(1) Firstly I wondered what you understand by the word ‘management’ in the context of the term collaborative management? and particularly in relation to the ‘Developing Collaborative Management’ skills project
(Prompt/probe – ie often people talk about ‘facilitating collaboration’ or ‘developing it’ but not necessarily ‘managing it’ Can collaboration be managed? Your understanding of the difference between collaboration/partnership and the management of collaboration/partnership)

(2) What skills/considerations would you say are different in operating in the context of the collaborative than are routine in managing your own institution? (Probe/prompt: autonomy versus collaboration, seeing the bigger picture, giving up something to gain something more -communication. Trust / mutuality)

(3) In your opinion what is different about the concept of ‘collaborative management’?

(4) Did you ,when you answered the above questions draw a distinction between the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project and the work of CADISE generally?

(5) If yes: what do you see as the distinction – what for you was the /Collaborative Management Skills project, and what is CADISE

© Bethan O’Neil: 2007
For example you often here about ‘facilitating collaboration’, developing collaboration but not so often the more business like term ‘managing collaboration’. Why do you think this is

Moving on to one of my research questions: WHY ACADEMIC CONSORTIA in UK Higher Education

(1) What do you think are the external factors that account for the growth of academic consortia in the UK?

(2) Do you think that the semi-compulsory policy context of partnerships and collaboration have influenced the growth of Consortia for better or for worse?

(3) Is it important therefore to understand the process of collaborative management?

(4) You've heard me talk about people, process and policy – how do you rank the importance of these in managing a collaboration?

(5) What is special about CADISE?

(6) What makes it work for you?

WHY THIS PARTICULAR CONSORTIA?

(1) What for you made the prospect of your institution joining CADISE attractive and what benefits did you anticipate there would be?
   (Probe/prompt: personal considerations; institutional history; external climate; policy)

(2) What has been valuable about the Developing Collaborative Management Skills project in this respect?
   (Probe/prompt – what do you perceive as the benefits
   What would you rank as the most significant benefit
   Do you think the collaboration would have been where it is today without it)

(3) What has not worked so well for you in – in the project and in collaborative management?
   (Probe/prompt: what do you perceive as the factors that inhibit effective collaborative management)

(4) Could you give me one example where you have been unhappy with the collaboration?

(5) Has there ever been anything so significant that you considered leaving the partnership?

(6) If so, how did you get over it?

(7) Did anyone within the Consortium know
   (prompt/probe: sharing/using others with CADISE as a sounding board)

(8) How has this work been more difficult for you?

SKILLS NECESSARY FOR COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

(1) Have you been involved with any other collaborations before CADISE?

(2) Could you tell me about your experience of collaboration before CADISE?
   Was it similar or different – what did it involve?
We talked a little earlier about skills/considerations that are different in operating in the context of a collaborative than are routine in managing your own institution – what part do you think that factors such as timescale, levels of commitment, participation (Probe/prompt: communication. Trust / mutuality)

Would you say that there are skills that you’ve use and learnt which have resulted in a shift from an autonomous function to collaborative working?

Is this a true statement – has there been this shift?

How far do you think the GMP project helped in this respect/did you know these anyway?

Do you think that the Policy group are clear on the goals and outcomes for the particular collaborative – what do you see as the goals?

What is the relationship between the processes of collaboration among the variety of people involved in the CADISE collaboration and the desired outcomes of the collaborative?

To what extent do you think concepts of power, autonomy and independence have influenced the collaboration?

With regard to decision making – am I right in thinking that CADISE is a model of consensus decision making? can you tell me a little bit about a decision/event that represents difficulty in this area?

**SUCCESSES OF THE PROJECT**

Do you think that CADISE has in fact established a collaborative partnership?

What do you think the Policy Group has worked hardest at within the Collaboration?

In summary if you were asked to describe the key success factors in managing a collaboration what would be the words that you would use

John Roberts in the GMP project in his GMP report of ‘leading collaboration’ (May 2001) concluded that the Policy Group is not yet ready to tell a strong story about the future of CADISE but it can tell a story in the context that led to the creation of CADISE, what has been achieved to date and what is being asked of staff in taking collaborative work forward – how far do you think this is evidence of successful collaborative management? Prompt/probe: in the absence of such communication from CPG then force of other’s perceptions, internally and externally will drive events

Do you think we’ve made progress since then – if not why not?

Finally, at the very beginning of the project, in May 2000 at the CPG first strategic away day, in its post it exercise on systematic process management, the then constituted group suggested the following in response to the questions: What is CADISE? What could it be? What are its needs? Could you take a minute to look at these & indicate how far you think many of these have been managed and achieved, and what might have been principal successes inhibitors.

Is there anything else you would wish to say about ‘developing collaborative management’

Thank you very much

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CADISE - What is it?

- A funded means of making people collaborate rather than compete
- A meeting of minds
- Allows useful swapping of best practice informally
- Arts is significant
- Self imposed collaborative enterprise of specialist institutions for the ARTS
- A formulaic response to a quango's initiative
- An eccentric challenge to the bureaucratic system
- A club and forum
- CADISE is a forum for specialist institutions and a vehicle for presenting bids/representing views to HEFCE
- An emerging collaborative bidding mechanism recognised by HEFCE
- An Association of Arts, Design and Media HEis to achieve benefits of scale without loss of autonomy
- A title which only the informed can identify
- Support network
- Select Club
- A funded project
- An exemplar of inter-institutional co-operation
- A family of specialist institutions

CADISE - What could it be?

- Powerful, influential, protective
- A big voice for the little institution
- A national representative voice for specialist institutions
- A challenge to establish real inter-disciplinary work
- An attractor of more funds
- A formally constituted consortium
- An enlightened pressure group with effective track record of achievement – gives more leverage within the system
- Enabling full recognition of the benefits of collaboration ie academic harmonisation
- An Exemplar, a model
- A powerful force for the specialist colleges with greater voice than its share of the market
- Advancement of a federal model
- A federal creative force protecting the voice of the individual
- A real lobby for specialist institutions securing the strengths of a large institutions but devolved to its constituents
- An alternative federal model
- Powerful strategic structure
- Powerful arts voice

CADISE – its strengths

- Our academic portfolios – coherence, but diverse also
- CADISE partners have more in common than separates them
- Collaboration produces more than the sum of its parts
- Institutional vitality and quirkiness
- Potential for sharing resource and expertise
CADISE – its strengths (contd.....)

- Opportunity for collaboration at all levels ie HEFCE/Govt and between students
- Represents high quality specialist institutions in a unique way
- Informal and willing collaboration
- Key people in positions of high profile, visibly collaborating
- Complimentary activities
- Sharpness of focus in Arts, Design and Media
- Autonomy of HEIs
- Diversity
- Excellent 'brand' of institutions
- Commitment of partners
- Ability to win funds
- HEFCE thinks we're a good idea (at present) therefore visible public support
- Fits nicely into HEFCE current policy
- Good financial support
- Seems the way forward
- Funding Council support
- Whole Spectrum of Creative Arts Specialisms
- Collective weight

CADISE – its weaknesses

- Strategic objectives for individual partners are different
- Threat to autonomy
- Identified as a network of small and parochial HEIs
- Lack of engagement or suspicion by our staff
- Some differences and varied knowledge of the way partners work
- Project dependence
- Reliance upon public funding
- Current success does not impact upon institutional profiles
- Rests upon informal collaboration (can be a weakness as well as strength)
- Small collaborative model – no public profile
- Lack of infrastructure
- The name
- Distance of partners meeting
- Possible downgrading of individual funding approaches in favour of broad brush consortium issues
- Lack of continuing resource for core funding
- Current perception of the group as 'CEO's talking shop' and not active throughout the institution
- Exclusivity – others are interested
- Delay in bringing all institutions up to speed
- Lacks coherent strategy
- Now larger difficult to manage

CADISE – the opportunities

- Sharing good practice
- Economies of scale
- Powerful regional arts voice
- Consolidation of the role of the Arts in HE
- Early player in the field
- Can effect the future of specialist provision
- Greater work on large scale benefits, services et al
- Opportunity to negotiate with HEFCE, FEFC for services
- Opportunity to sell services in the sector
CADISE – the opportunities (contd...)

- To create platform for promoting excellence in our disciplines
- Consolidate as a coherent and single reference for the sector
- To ensure the maintenance of the specialist sector
- Lobbying strengths
- Develop academic coherence and involve regional provision
- Cut fixed overheads
- Inter-collegiate recreational/student exchange
- Focused involvement of others?
- Show off – exploit good will and support evident at present
- Staff development and sharing of good practice

CADISE – the threats

- Lack of focus/time.... Loss of members
- CVCP
- CADISE as an organisation will fail to meet objectives of individual partners and find it difficult to manage disputes as opposed to consensus
- Increased competition from larger institutions and other partnership will undermine bidding success
- CADISE will drop some of its shine and promotion by HEFCE
- Lack of cohesion as it grows
- Seen as an exclusive club
- Relationship with SCOP or other agencies
- Long term funding instability
- Forced 'artificial' collaboration for the sake of it
- Reliance on HEFCE funding
- Must stay ahead of the game
- Can be overtaken by events, changes in policy, etc
- Alternative model imposition by external agencies
- Cash shortage
- Loss of momentum and dilution of focus
- Inability to reconcile each individual disciplinary needs
- Top heavy emphasis – need to engage staff
- Competitive imperatives
- Focus vs expansive generous approach

CADISE – What are its needs?

- Enhanced administrative infrastructure
- Proper institutional audit/needs analysis
- Long term finance
- Core Funding and Location
- Greater means of sharing activity between institutions
- Administrative support
- Time for us and staff
- Direct collaboration route to agencies: HE, FE et al
- Public success and acknowledgement
- Longer term funding
- Sustained goodwill
- A broad strategic plan
- A stronger operational framework
- Agreed long term objectives
- Improved operational infrastructure
- Better sector profile
# 15 Key Strategic Challenges for UK Higher Education Institutions

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<th>Sub-Challenges</th>
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<td>Embedding equality and diversity in all institutional activities</td>
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APPENDIX 6

LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

15 KEY STRATEGIC CHALLENGES FOR UK HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

15 key strategic challenges for UK HE Institutions, 2005 -2010
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POST SCRIPT


In August 2005, post the White Paper (2003) and Higher Education Act (2004), the strategic directions of seven of the (then) eight 'T' institutions had become much clearer. The Policy Group took a decision that as five different strategic directions had emerged from the partnership, that on my leaving to take up a post elsewhere 'T' should exist as a virtual grouping only, celebrating the work it had done over the previous six years, but without formal input from the CEOs meeting as the Policy Group.

The directions that emerged were:

- Coundon Institute ] to merge to form a new Institution to be called ] the University College for the Creative Arts
- Earlsdon Institute ] (August 2005)
- Sunnybank Institute to merge with a neighbouring Dance Conservatoire to become a specialist institution of the University of London Federation (September 2005)
- Priory Institute to become a College of the University of the Arts, London (in 2006)
- Ashdown Institute to continue its role in the South West Region as a specialist institution
- Bryanstone Institute, Sunnybank Institute and the eighth 'T' member to continue as a cluster of specialist institutions with interests in the creative and cultural industries in and around a specific locality in London.